The Dutch St. Peter's

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Abstract

In Oudenbosch, a small village in the southern part of the Netherlands, stands a remarkable imitation of St. Peter's Basilica: The Holy Agatha and Barbara Basilica. This church is one of at least a dozen St. Peter imitations scattered around the world. The existing literature on this topic is restricted to examinations of how such buildings came to be whilst researchers fail to consider this replication practice as a worldwide phenomenon. These analyses leave a huge issue untouched: How do these buildings affect each other's experience? This study is a first attempt to explore this by investigating how the experience of the Holy Agatha and Barbara is influenced by, or influences, the experience of the St. Peter's. This thesis starts off with a phenomenological description of both churches in order to scrutinize how their respective designs relate to each other, followed by an analysis of this connection from religious, art-historical and heritage perspectives. Moreover, to connect this study to the larger practice of St. Peter imitation, the results of this study are continuously compared to two additional case studies: The Mary, Queen of the World Cathedral in Montreal and the Our Lady of Peace Basilica in Yamoussoukro. By using Birgit Meyer's theory on aesthetic formations, I argue, via a hermeneutical approach, that the experience of an imitation does not necessarily direct the attention to the original. As I will show, the focus on the St. Peter's is pre-eminent in a religious perspective, but the art-historical and heritage perspectives actually present a move away from the original Basilica. This dynamic can be detected in the additional case studies as well, suggesting that imitations throughout the world function in parallel. Overall, this study tests the merits and restrictions of Meyer's theory, putting forward the term *auxiliary sensational form* and the sacred capital / aura paradox.

Tags: Imitation, St. Peter's Basilica, aesthetic formation, sensational form, sacred value.

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Introduction: The Vatican in Oudenbosch

In Oudenbosch, a small village in the southern part of the Netherlands, stands a remarkable church: The Holy Agatha and Barbara Basilica (see figure 1). This church, whose construction was ordered by local pastor Willem Hellemons and built by the architects Pierre Cuypers and Gerardus van Swaay between 1865 and 1892, looks facing front strikingly similar to the St. John Lateran Basilica in Rome while the remainder of the exterior reminds one of the St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, with a large central dome as its ultimate highlight. When entering the church, the similarities with St. Peter's Basilica become even more clear. Then it is immediately evident that this church imitates the famous Roman Basilica, as underneath the dome a *Baldacchino* is located, and the high altar features artworks that

Figure 1. Basilica of the Holy Agatha and Barbara. Pierre Cuypers and Gerardus van Swaay,1865-1892, Oudenbosch.

strongly resemble the *Cattedra Petri* of the St. Peter's. Moreover, the dome has similar paintings and the rest of the church's decorations – the marbled walls, the fluted pillars and the vaulted ceiling – are just like those in Rome. It is not surprising that architects are inspired by the St. Peter's. This building has had, and still has, a major impact on both religious and non-religious architecture ever since the Basilica was finished in the seventeenth century (Etlin 2005). Nonetheless, the degree of imitation found in the Holy Agatha and Barbara is rare. For a long time I was not even aware of the Basilica's existence, even as a religious studies student, and when I finally saw this church I was struck with amazement. Why does such a grand imitation of the St. Peter's exist in such a small village? Does the Catholic Church approve of this imitation? Are there more buildings like it? And, above all, do the Catholics of Oudenbosch experience a piece of Rome when they attend mass in the Basilica? This study is dedicated to answering precisely those questions.

The issue of St. Peter imitation previously did not get much attention within the field of religious studies. The few studies that exist often focus on a single example of imitation (for example Elleh 2002; De Valk 2012; Van Casteren 1975; Wilkinson 2010), with the exception of Richard Etlin who analysed multiple examples of this practice throughout the Western World (2005). What each of these publications do, is narrate the origins of these imitations, how these came to be, and how they continue to function in the contemporary world. What they lack, however, is an analysis of how the imitations and the original affect each other's experience and how these individual examples relate to the general practice of St. Peter imitation or religious imitations at large. I aim to fill the gap in the existing literature by analysing how the experience of the Holy Agatha and Barbara is influenced by, or influences, the experience of the St. Peter's. There are many perspectives from which the experiences of these churches can be analysed, of which a religious and an art-historical approach are the most obvious. However, as the art-historical experiences of these churches are closely linked to a heritage framework, it makes sense to take this viewpoint into account too. Therefore my analysis will follow these three perspectives. Moreover, I wish to connect my research to the larger practice of St. Peter imitation worldwide. To this end I have identified two additional case studies on which I will continuously reflect my findings from the Holy Agatha and Barbara Basilica, namely The Mary, Queen of the World Cathedral in Montreal (see figure 2), as ordered by bishop Ignace Bourget and built between 1875 and 1894 by Victor Bourgeau and Joseph Michaud, and the Our Lady of Peace Basilica in Yamoussoukro (see figure 3), requested by former Ivorian president Félix Houphouët-Boigny and constructed by Pierre Fakhoury between 1985 and 1990. How I organize my research and what theoretical

foundations I use, I will explain momentarily, but first I need to justify why I chose the case studies referred to above.

Figure 2. The Mary, Queen of the World Cathedral. Victor Bourgeau and Joseph Michaud, 1875-1894, Montreal.

Figure 3. The Basilica of Our Lady of Peace. Pierre Fakhoury, 1985-1990, Yamoussoukro.

Having access to information about the Holy Agatha and Barbara is the main reason why I selected this church as the principal case study. I have the opportunity to repeatedly visit the Basilica, its archives, and consult various academic texts already written about this church. Additionally, sources such as newspaper articles or websites are written in Dutch, which is my native language. Unfortunately this does not apply if I study other St. Peter imitations. For example, I would have liked to study the Crowned Mother of Good Counsel Church in Naples too, but the little information available about this church is only written in Italian. Also I do not have the opportunity to visit this church. Neither do I have the means to visit the Mary, Queen of the World Cathedral, nor the Our Lady of Peace Basilica, but here language barriers do not exist, as information about these churches is available in either French or English. Moreover, academic papers about these churches have already been written, thus providing a stepping stone for my research. Lastly, I have chosen these two churches as additional case studies, because they each represent a St. Peter imitation in a different part of the world. This way my analysis truly takes the wider context of St. Peter imitation into account.

Theoretical Framework: Materiality, Experience, Aesthetic Formation

After having shortly introduced my research question and case studies, I will now explain the theoretical foundations of my research. As mentioned above, my primary interest is the way in which the experience of the Holy Agatha and Barbara is affected by the St. Peter's and vice versa. I take Birgit Meyer's notion of aesthetic formation as the basis for my analysis. The term is an extension of Benedict Anderson's notion of the "imaged community", which is the idea that groups of people are bonded via a certain *imagination* of their community, implying that members of such a group never have to meet each other in person to still feel connected to one another (Anderson 2006, 6,7). Meyer wanted to build on this concept, as it acknowledges that "communities evolve around mediated imaginations that are able to substitute the (spatial) distance between members with a feeling of togetherness" (Meyer 2009, 3). However, she is critical of Anderson's theory behind this term, because he barely discusses the need for tangible spaces and objects in the production of those imaginations (ibid., 5). To address this limitation, Meyer introduces an Aristotelian notion of aesthetics, which "designates our corporeal capability on the basis of a power given in our psyche to perceive objects in the world via our five different sensorial modes (...), and at the same time a specific constellation of sensations as a whole" (ibid., 6). In other words, the use of aesthetics in this understanding refers to the sensory experience of humans and the

knowledge that follows from it. An aesthetic formation, then, is the creation of communities through the formative impact of shared aesthetics, induced by the experience of a tangible medium such as images, objects and spaces (ibid., 7).

I have multiple reasons for applying this concept to my research. Firstly, the term aesthetic formation incorporates a definition of experience, which is essential when studying how different encounters affect and connect to each other. This study needs to take a position on what an experience *is* and Meyer provides a threefold conception of it. According to her, experience is something that produces knowledge in the first place as she uses an Aristotelian notion of aesthetics. Secondly, experience relates to the senses, thereby adopting a notion of it in its broadest meaning: Seeing, smelling, hearing, tasting and touching. Moreover, as these senses produce knowledge, she also recognizes the role of consciousness (Strawson 2010, 2). Lastly, Meyer sees experience as something that depends on already existing information. The shared aesthetics imply that people, within the same community, have the same background, which produces a certain way of encountering things. In other words, experience does not happen in a vacuum, but is informed by previous knowledge (ibid., 4). How this works Meyer further explains in her conception of sensational form, which will be discussed hereafter.

Meyer describes sensational forms as "an authorized procedure to experience, in a structured manner, a movement towards a limit that evokes a sense of there being something more: a 'beyond'" (2015, 20). Put differently, these procedures create a sacred surplus – a feeling of awe or wow – that brings the subject closer to something that exceeds the ordinary (ibid.). This concept refers specifically to "a configuration of religious media, acts, imaginations and sensations in the context of a religious tradition or group", which are sanctioned by the authorities, suggesting the presence of pre-experience knowledge (ibid.). Following this understanding, the St. Peter's and the Holy Agatha and Barbara are thus sensational forms too. The way I interpret Meyer's work, sensational forms constitute an aesthetic formation. For example, a Catholic who visits St. Peter's Basilica may experience a sense of awe when approaching the grave of the apostle, a sensation he or she shares with any other community member who also understands the significance of the place. This shared experience of awe when visiting the St. Peter's binds these people together, thus creating an aesthetic formation. Meyer's theory on religious matter therefore provides a comprehensive view on religious matter that takes both the individual and the collective dimensions of experience into account.

In addition, Meyer's way of thinking unites multiple perspectives on what religion essentially is. From the nineteenth century through the middle part of the twentieth century,

scholars like Friedrich Schleiermacher, William James, Mircea Eliade and Rudolf Otto regarded religion as the subject's experience of a state, episode or consciousness that is religious in nature (Bush 2014, 24-25). The emphasis was very much on the individual's interior belief, whilst religious materiality was mostly neglected[1] (Meyer and Houtman 2012, 2). However, this conception of religion waned in the latter part of the twentieth century, as a shift to an understanding of religion as a language system occurred, of which Clifford Geertz is regarded as the most prominent spokesperson (Bush 2014, 36). This movement was followed by a "turn to power", where Talal Asad most prominently upheld religion as being a network of "institutions and practices that discipline human bodies into particular types of subjects" (ibid., 49). This turn to power also entailed the "material turn" in religion in which Meyer's work is situated (Meyer et al. 2010). Although her work is part of this scholarly movement, I here argue that her account of aesthetic formation actually takes aspects from all previous traditions into account. Firstly, as explained above, she takes both individual and collective experiences into account. Secondly, she simultaneously acknowledges the importance of Geertz and Asad by situating religious matter in a certain language determined by the authorities; these dictate a shared aesthetics that produces a sensation of the divine within a community, which on the one hand indicates a power dynamic and on the other hand shows the use of certain symbols and other expressions. It is this diversified application of the three main perspectives in religious studies that makes the term aesthetic formation suitable for analysing religious materiality and its effects.

The fourth reason why I use Meyer's theory is because I can use the term aesthetic formation to illustrate the primacy of the St. Peter's in the Roman Catholic world. As the St. Peter's is so important for Catholics, it is appropriate to use a theory that exemplifies its status. When it comes to architecture, I argue that the St. Peter's is the central medium in the Catholic aesthetic formation because of its iconicity. According to Dominik Bartmański and Jeffrey Alexander an icon is an object that does not only have material force but also has symbolic power, as the material contains encoded messages that only people familiar with the code will understand (2012, 1). As will be explained in chapter 1, St. Peter's iconicity represents the power of the Vatican and the papacy, which means that anyone who encounters this image anywhere in the world will recall these things. Furthermore, Catholics in particular are united by their reverence for St. Peter's Basilica and its iconic meanings, which binds them together in the aesthetic formation of worldwide Roman Catholicism. For this reason,

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[1] This is except for the works of Emile Durkheim and Robert R. Marett who took a material approach to religion. It is precisely the thought of these scholars that inspired Meyer's work. Still, as explained above, this period is mostly defined by intellectuals who focused on religion as interior belief ((Bush 2014, 24-25).

the central question of this study is to learn how the experience of the Holy Agatha and Barbara is actually influenced by, or influences, the St. Peter's as *the central medium* in the aesthetic formation of Roman Catholicism.

The fifth reason for my adoption of the concept of aesthetic formation concerns the idea of a shared aesthetics, which has, as a consequence, that I can draw general conclusions from just one experience. As illustrated above, Catholics who visit St. Peter's tomb will have similar sensations, because their faith instructs them to regard that place as sacred. This implies that when you analyse just one encounter, the outcome will resemble the outcomes as if you were to analyse an entire group who shares this one person's aesthetics. In this thesis I haven't incorporated ethnographic field work. Instead I draw from written and spoken statements made by Oudenbosch's pastor Hellemons to assess what experiences the Holy Agatha and Barbara elicit. The idea of a shared aesthetics, however, indicates that Hellemons's sensations are likely present in the encounters of other Catholic visitors of the Basilica as well. Overall, as long as I can identify the contents of the shared aesthetics I can also define its effects in a general sense.

Lastly, Meyer's theory implies interesting consequences I wish to explore. For example, there may be other aesthetic formations around the same object when there are different ways of experiencing this object. The St. Peter's is a prime example of this, not only because it is a sacred site for Catholics, but it is also a monument that houses outstanding artworks from the Renaissance and the Baroque eras. Those who are not Christian, and come to appreciate the art of the Basilica instead, will pay less attention to the religious significance of the building and will lean more towards the craftsmanship of Bernini or Michelangelo. This is not to say that religious meanings do not contribute to an artwork in a worldly fashion. The ability of an artist to successfully convey a certain message is part of the artistic achievement. Nevertheless, non-Christians have a different aesthetics, because they visit St. Peter's for an entirely different purpose. This example illustrates the likelihood of the existence of several aesthetic formations around the same object and it will be interesting to see whether this applies to both the St. Peter's and the Holy Agatha and Barbara. Now that I have explained my use of Meyer's theory as the foundation for my research, I will turn to the question how churches that look similar should be called.

Appropriation, Replication, Imitation, or Copying? How To Define Churches that Look Alike?

In the existing literature regarding imitations of the St. Peter's the authors tend to call these churches replicas or copies. This terminology is used by Hans de Valk (2012) and J.W.C. van Casteren (1975), for example, as to define the Holy Agatha and Barbar. Also Namhdi Elleh (2002) and Leonhard Praeg (2017) use these words to describe to the Our Lady of Peace, as well as Jean Claude Marsan (1990) and Sarah Wilkinson (2010) to characterize the Mary, Queen of the World Cathedral. Curiously, these scholars do not justify why they use these terms. Their choices might be rooted in the choice of words that the designers of these imitations used to describe their projects. In Oudenbosch pastor Hellemons wanted "to follow" the example of the St. Peter's on a "smaller scale", which strongly suggests that he wanted a replica (Van Casteren 1975, 60). In Montreal Bishop Bourget even explicitly proposed to build a replica (Gowans 1955, 13). Therefore it can be argued that the aforementioned scholars simply continued this use of vocabulary, yet they do not mention this. I argue that it is wrong to call these churches replicas or copies. These terms connote exactness, which only apply when the original design is reproduced in precisely the same form and material. This is not the case in my case studies because the design of these churches differ at certain points and the materials diverge from the materials used in the original, hence these churches cannot be called replicas or copies. But are they then appropriations or imitations?

To call these churches appropriations is also incorrect. Appropriation refers generally to taking or borrowing certain cultural properties of another cultural group and making them one's own, often done in a forcible way without permission (Kinney 2011, 21; Root 1996, 70; Welchman 2001, 1). This term thus implies some kind of unbalanced power dynamic where one group can just take items or issues from another, a dynamic akin to stealing. Although the case studies make the St. Peter's "their own", I do not find that forced dispossession is at stake here, as these churches all belong to the same community of worldwide Roman Catholicism. Therefore these churches do not present an instance of taking elements from another culture without consent.

With the phrases replica, copy and appropriation cast aside, imitation is the only term left, a term I actually find to be particularly fitting to describe these churches. Drawing on Plato's and Aristotle's notion of imitation, it means "to represent", which implies that it resembles an object whilst not being identical to it (Rockmore 2013, 15). This becomes even more clear when looking at Plato's theory of forms. He argues that ideas of things made by

the Gods exist, whilst the same items that are present on earth are rather confined imitations of these ideas (ibid., 30). These objects are limited, because they fail to represent all the aspects of the Godly idea, as they are only able to represent one perspective of the idea at the time (ibid.). The imitation thus resembles the idea of the thing in some ways, but an imitation never truly becomes the original idea. Plato's theory of forms is often connected to his criticism of art, which he based on the proposition that artworks were always an imitation of an imitation of an idea. In other words, for Plato art is always three times removed from the truth. His student Aristotle built further on this, as he argued that imitations differ from the original in the following ways: By using different media, objects and points of view (Eldridge 2012, 27). This stresses even more the idea that imitations intend to represent something, but that these do this in different ways so that they can never become identical to the example. This way of thinking inspired me to apply the term imitation to my case studies. In their own ways the churches in my study represent different aspects of the St. Peter's, by reproducing the dome, the facade or the *Baldacchino,* to name a few. Yet the materials used differ and situate these elements in different perspectives. The result is not a copy, replication or appropriation, but an *imitation* of the St. Peter's.

If imitation means representation, this raises the question how imitations can be identified in the first place. As the St. Peter's has had such an impact on the history of architecture, many buildings reference the Basilica. Are those buildings, because of these references, imitations too? Where does one draw the line? The way I see it, there are buildings that are typified by having a minimum of imitation and those that show a maximum of imitation. The Capitol in Washington, for example, alludes to the St. Peter's by its dome, yet the building itself does not follow the Basilica in many other aspects of its design (Etlin 2005, 293-294). However, a church like the Holy Agatha and Barbara reproduces the St. Peter's dome, the *Baldacchino*, the *Cattedra Petri* and its entire interior decorations. Still the building has its own unique features that reference other architectural examples. The Capitol thus imitates the St. Peter's at a minimum level and the Holy Agatha and Barbara at a maximum instance. Nonetheless, I do not find it appropriate to call buildings such as the Capitol an imitation of the St. Peter's. The element of imitation is strictly confined to the dome and it is not present in many other aspects of the building, hence the structure as a whole cannot be called an imitation of the St. Peter's. In contrast, it would be exasperating to single out every imitated element of St. Peter's in the Holy Agatha and Barbara Basilica. As the imitated elements in this church are so abundant I argue that it is more productive to call the entire building an imitation of the St. Peter's.

Methods

In the first two chapters I will apply a phenomenological method to explore how these two churches connect to each other in terms of design. Why have the St. Peter's and the Holy Agatha and Barbara been built? What architectural elements or artworks stand out? How do these elements convey certain ideological messages? However, when I move to the analysis of how these churches affect each other's experience, I employ a hermeneutical approach. I will take primary sources from the Vatican, pastor Hellemons, the Dutch government, *Museum Catharijneconvent* and Oudenbosch's local foundation for the Holy Agatha and Barbara (*Stichting Behoud Basiliek Oudenbosch*) to determine the attitudes and sensations of the interested parties from religious, art-historical and heritage perspectives. I interpret these sources by connecting this information to the existing literature on these topics. To illustrate, in chapter 3 I use a sermon by Hellemons to discern how he experienced the idea of having a St. Peter's imitation in his own village, followed by an analysis of how Hellemons's feelings concur with the findings of other studies on religious imitation, most notably the works of Colleen McDannel (1995), James Bielo (2017) and Rhoda Woets (2017). In the next section I will further expand on this strategy where I explicate which sources I use per chapter. In addition, I apply an interdisciplinary use of theories to my research. This means that I employ terms from the field of religious studies to my art-historical analysis and vice versa. I find that a concept like sensational form in particular should not be limited to the sphere of religious studies, as it has such a great potential to illuminate processes of art appreciation and heritagization.

Structure

This thesis is structured as follows: The first two chapters are a phenomenology of the St. Peter's and the Holy Agatha and Barbara, where I explore the origins of these churches, their artworks and meanings. The subsequent three chapters are an analysis of how these churches influence each other from religious, art-historical and heritage perspectives respectively. Chapter 1 and 2 are therefore an extended introduction to the cases, in order to clarify the similarities and differences between them. It is essential to understand these issues before moving on to a more in depth analysis, as it is impossible to comprehend how the churches affect each other's experience without knowing how these are visually similar.

In the phenomenology of the St. Peter's I discern three ideologies behind the construction, which are expressed in the Basilica's architecture and artworks. The first ideology concerns the idea that the Basilica had to become the "new" Solomon's Temple,

which the use of Solomonic columns demonstrates throughout the church. Secondly, the Basilica had to represent the triumph of the Church over paganism, which is illustrated by the use of classical architecture and the re-purposing of elements from the old Basilica. Thirdly, the St. Peter's is a testimony of Counter-Reformation ideals, such as the legitimacy of the papacy and the need for the clergy in Christian life. These ideas reveal themselves in artworks such as the *Baldacchino* and the *Cattedra Petri*, which indicate a connection between the apostle Peter and the papacy. On the whole, these three ideologies support one overarching theme: The St. Peter's as the absolute centre of worldwide Christianity. Because the building sends such a powerful message it has inspired architecture in the Western World ever since the seventeenth century. References to the Basilica often establish associations with the spiritual and temporal power of the Vatican. However, architects were also inspired to appropriate elements of the church – such as St. Peter's Square – for promulgating their own particular messages, simply because these elements are so compelling.

In the second chapter I will survey pastor Hellemons's motives behind the construction of a St. Peter imitation in Oudenbosch. His reasons can be traced back to his ultramontane tendencies, his personal connection to the great churches of Rome, his belief in the sacredness of St. Peter's design and his preference for the St. Peter's arrangement of space. These are the reasons why the Basilica has the St. Peter's dome, the *Baldacchino*, the *Cattedra Petri* and St. Peter's overall decorations. Still, the Oudenbosch church contains elements that are not based on those in the St. Peter's. Some are obvious like the facade, others are more conspicuous, such as the exterior shape of the dome. These differences are the result of pastor Hellemons's and the architect Pierre Cuypers's inclination to "improve" the design of the St. Peter's and honour Oudenbosch's local histories. In the last part of this chapter I will explore how the Holy Agatha and Barbara compares to the construction of the Mary, Queen of the World Cathedral and the Our Lady of Peace Basilica. As it turns out, the church in Montreal is also the product of ultramontanism and a clergyman's personal affection for Rome. These dynamics are not present in the case of the Our Lady of Peace, however this church also shares the idea of "improving" the St. Peter's with the Basilica in Oudenbosch. Additionally, the comparison between these churches shows that imitation can also be the result of a high stakes political agenda, which influenced both churches in Montreal and Yamoussoukro, but which has not been part of the motivation for the imitation in Oudenbosch.

In the third chapter I start the actual analysis of how the St. Peter's influences the experience of the Holy Agatha and Barbara and vice versa from a religious perspective. My first step is to investigate how the authorities of the Church think about imitations in Catholic

church architecture, as approval by authorities is a prerequisite if the case studies can be treated as sensational forms. Based on the decrees of the Council of Trent (1545-1563), the constitutions of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and the Catechism of the Catholic Church I argue that the Church generally approves of imitation as an educational means and as a boost for piety. However, this only applies to architecture as long as it is done tastefully. In the second part of the chapter I shift my attention to the influence of the St. Peter's on the experience of the Holy Agatha and Barbara. Here I use a sermon by Hellemons included in J.W.C. van Casteren's book *Oudenbosch: beknopt historisch overzicht* and connect his thoughts to the studies of Bielo (2017), Datta (2019), McDannel (1995) and Woets (2017). Based on this analysis I contend that the connection to the St. Peter's elicits four effects: The imitated elements remind one of the St. Peter's, they provide something what I call an *auxiliary* sensational form, they enhance the church's sacred capital and they are an expression of devotion to the St. Peter's itself. Because all of these so clearly draw the attention to the original, I argue that the Holy Agatha and Barbara enforces the focus on the St. Peter's as the central medium in the aesthetic formation of Roman Catholicism. This does not work the other way around.

This focus on the St. Peter's slightly wanes when the question is approached from an art-historical perspective. In the fourth chapter I use the monumental values of nineteenth century art-historian Alois Riegl to indicate how both churches are precisely appreciated as works of art. In the first half of that chapter I analyse how the St. Peter's influences the art-historical experience of the Holy Agatha and Barbara. Here I find that an appreciation of the Basilica's unique history actually emphasizes the individuality of this church, thereby moving the focus away from St. Peter's. However, the connection to the Roman original re-appears when drawing attention to the artworks of the Holy Agatha and Barbara, because they cannot be defined without reference to the St. Peter's while at the same time, these artworks come with their unique history too. I further investigate this relationship by applying the findings from chapter 3 to the art-historical perspective. This again shows that the imitation provides a reminder of, and a sensational form towards, the original. However, when discussing the enhancement of sacred capital, here there is not necessarily a connection to the St. Peter's, because there is nowadays an interest in the practice of imitation *per se*. In the second half of this chapter I turn the situation around and analyse how the Holy Agatha and Barbara affects an encounter with the St. Peter's. Here it is again conceivable that these churches remind of each other. In contrast, it is unlikely that the St. Peter's provides a sensational form towards the Basilica in Oudenbosch, because the Holy Agatha and Barbara is, in all aspects, not a

"beyond" compared to the St. Peter's. Particularly interesting is the connection I found between Benjamin's notion of aura and Meyer's sensational form, which results in a paradox where it cannot be said with certainty how the imitation affects the sacred capital of the original. As I will explain a sensational form, embodied by an imitation, preserves and enhances the aura of the original, but, from Benjamin's perspective, the imitation already provides a taste of the original experience, thereby diminishing the original's aura. On the whole, the focus on the St. Peter's, within the aesthetic formation of Roman Catholicism is more ambiguous from an art-historical perspective.

In chapter five I will show that, from a heritage perspective the Holy Agatha and Barbara is even more independent from the St. Peter's. Although the Church does prescribe ways in which Catholic heritage should be perceived, this viewpoint has been obscured by the national Dutch heritage framework. Drawing on the Vatican's publications "The Cultural Heritage of the Church and Religious Families" (1994), "Towards a Pastoral Approach to Culture" (1999), and speeches made by pope John Paul II and pope Francis on the topic of cultural heritage, I conclude that the Church perceives heritage as an evangelizing means, as a source for increased piety and as evidence of God's presence amongst humanity. These may be represented as spiritual ideas, but I argue that they are just about as much political, because they stimulate the growth and stability of the Church. Within this context the St. Peter's is probably the most important heritage site of the Church, as the building receives thousands of visitors every day while propagating a combined message of the spiritual and political importance of the Church. This makes the Holy Agatha and Barbara a particularly interesting heritage site, as it gives the Church a *second chance* to convey the message of the St. Peter's. Nevertheless, the importance of this connection disappears when considering the Holy Agatha and Barbara from a national Dutch heritage perspective. Based on the governmental policy letter "Erfgoed telt" (heritage counts) and the mission statements of both the *Museum Catharijneconvent* and the *Stichting Behoud Basiliek Oudenbosch*, the Basilica serves as a symbol of the Dutch Judaeo-Christian tradition, with social, aesthetic and economic functions associated to it. Overall, in this framework, the actual message of the Basilica becomes less important, because here the church is simply seen as a manifestation of Dutch Christianity. As the two perspectives each dictate such a different way of experiencing the Holy Agatha and Barbara, I conclude that the Basilica belongs to two different aesthetic formations: An aesthetic formation devised by the Church and an aesthetic formation determined by Dutch national and local parties. The latter constitutes a further move away from the focus on the St. Peter's.

In the conclusion of the chapter I return to the research question to conclude that how one experiences the imitation or the original depends greatly on the perspective one takes, or, more precisely, on what aesthetic formation one participates in. Within a religious aesthetic formation the Holy Agatha and Barbara directs the attention primarily to the St. Peter's, but when looking at the Basilica from an art-historical viewpoint, there is more room to appreciate the unique history of this church. It is therefore not self-evident that an imitation aims the focus at the original. Moreover, similar dynamics can be detected in the additional case studies, although there are certain differences in the details. Furthermore, in the conclusion I highlight the term auxiliary sensational form and the sacred capital / aura paradox as this study's main theoretical contributions. I will also reflect on the method, outcomes and provide suggestions for further research.

1. A Phenomenology of the St. Peter's Basilica: The Absolute Centre of the Catholic Church

Introduction

In this chapter I will examine the ideologies behind the construction of the St. Peter's, how these ideologies manifest themselves in the Basilica's design and artworks and what the fundamentals are of the Basilica's legacy. A good apprehension of these aspects is needed to understand why the St. Peter's attracts so much imitation. As will be demonstrated, the design of the Basilica is associated with both temporal and spiritual power, which in turn attracts people in various places around the world to borrow elements from this church.

1.1 From Solomon's Temple to the Counter-Reformation: The Ideologies behind the Construction

By the fifteenth century, plans emerged to rebuild the old Basilica of St. Peter. These came with a long list of reasons of why the old Basilica had to be reconstructed; the building was in decay, the site was cluttered with haphazard monuments, the church itself was too small to accommodate the ever-increasing numbers of pilgrims, and the Renaissance era stimulated the ambition to rebuild the Basilica in a style more in accordance with humanist values (Lees-Milne 1967, 124-125). During the reign of Pope Nicholas V (1397-1455), who concerned himself with beautifying the city of Rome as a whole, the first plans were laid out for the construction of a new Basilica (ibid., 124). The overall construction took more than a hundred years, and the site was not finished until the mid seventeenth century. During this time multiple ideologies and papal policies determined the design of the church. In this section I will explain what these ideologies were and how these changed over time. Nevertheless, there were also ideas that lasted throughout the entire building period.

In the first construction plans the principal aim was to build a church that could be compared to Solomon's Temple (Campbell 1981, 3). During the early Renaissance, it was a long established tradition to regard Rome as the successor of Jerusalem being the Christian centre of the world (ibid.), firstly because the apostle Peter, the first leader of the church, was buried in Rome. Secondly, it was presumed that Helen, the mother of Constantine the Great, gifted ornaments and treasures from the plundered Solomon's Temple to the St. John Lateran

Basilica in Rome (ibid.). This also qualified the city as being the new capital of Christianity, hence the new church had to look the part. The papacies of Nicholas V and Julius II (1443-1515) best illustrate the intention to make the new Basilica comparable to the Temple. Nicholas studied the descriptions of the Temple in the Old Testament in order to make a plan for the new church (ibid., 4), which endeavor was later taken up by Julius II who himself was compared more than once to Solomon due to his efforts to rebuild the St. Peter's (ibid.). During the construction of the church, which started in 1506, the views on the desired appearance of the church changed. Later designs focused less on the Temple's example, however, major references to it can still be found in the church as it is today. The *Baldacchino* and the piers supporting the dome are the most evident examples of this. In the old Basilica St. Peter's tomb was covered by a canopy supported by columns supposedly originating from the Temple (ibid., 3; Mullett 1999, 200). When Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680) was tasked to build a new canopy over the apostle's tomb, he constructed the new columns in the same style (Mullett 1999, 200). The Solomonic columns from the old Basilica are now used in the niches of the piers supporting the dome, where they frame relics of St. Peter (Campbell 1981, 3).

The Renaissance's fascination with classical Roman and Greek architecture would eventually steer the first decades of the construction. The classical style was approved of on an ideological level, because this emphasized the Christian victory over paganism. One of the first architects of the new St. Peter's, Donato Bramante (1544-1514), incorporated this idea by making a design based on the Pantheon and the Temple of Peace.[2] He chose the Pantheon because it was the first temple to be converted to a church in 609 AD and the building was subsequently dedicated to Mary and Martyrs, thus highlighting the victory of the early Christians. Moreover, since early Christianity, circular forms – like the dome of the Pantheon – were considered to be a suitable cover for the graves of martyrs. For this reason, a dome was deemed appropriate to demarcate the grave of the apostle too (ibid., 5). Additionally, the Temple of Peace was used as legend told that it collapsed on the night Christ was born (ibid., 6), even further stressing the Church's triumph over paganism. Bramante's design ultimately looked as if the dome of the Pantheon was placed over the Temple of Peace (see figure 4; Lees-Milne 1967, 145), thereby assimilating the symbolisms and meanings of the two landmarks into his overall design.

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[2]   What was called the Temple of Peace during the Renaissance is actually the Basilica of Maxentius on the Roman Forum (Lees-Milne 1967, 145; Campbell 1981, 4-5). However, this was unknown at the time.

Figure 4. Bronze medal displaying Bramante's plan for the St. Peter's.
Cristoforo Caradosso Foppa, 1506, Italy.

Throughout the fifteenth century the papacy was stronger than ever before. Indulgences and treasures from the new world provided the Vatican with enormous wealth and the power of the pope was absolute (ibid., 135). The construction of the new St. Peter's Basilica was the ultimate expression of this era's prosperity and stability. However, dissatisfaction with the Church's authorities soon started to grow at the start of the sixteenth century, as many people – especially Northern Europeans – loathed the corruption of the clergy as well as the Italian character of the Church's leadership (Po-Chia Hsia 2007, 335). This discontent eventually culminated in the Reformation, which urged the Catholic Church to rethink its place in the world and to reform accordingly. This process is called the Catholic Counter-Reformation which began with the Council of Trent (1545-1563). The Council's purpose was, amongst other things, to condemn Protestant heresies, to solve theological problems, to assert the authority of the pope and to design a cultural program in order to keep the people connected to the Church. The cultural policy resulting from the Council was

threefold; art had to be simple and intelligible, art had to present a realistic interpretation and art had to provide an emotional stimulus for piety (Mulcahy 2011, 133). On the one hand these requirements functioned to educate lay people, as well as to strengthen their beliefs on the other hand (ibid., 132). This led to the emergence of a new artistic style called the Baroque, a style defined by excess, distortion and the triggering of emotions. The emotional aspect made the style especially suitable for the agenda of the Vatican and it thus became the "house style" of the Catholic Reformation (Mullett 1999, 196). The construction of the new St. Peter's coincided for a large part with this post-Tridentine cultural agenda, which allowed new ideas to take centre stage. Most prominently the Basilica had to show that Rome was the centre of Christianity and it needed to convince people of the validity of the office of the pope. Generally, the construction of this Basilica is often seen as the primary example of Counter-Reformation art and architecture.

This overview of the ideologies behind the construction of the St. Peter's Basilica shows that ideas developed and changed over time. The first ideas focused on Solomon's Temple. Subsequently the Church's triumph over paganism became a prominent ideology, later followed by the Counter-Reformation during which it was of great importance to validate the leading role of the pope and other Catholic authorities. However, one theme unites all of these ideas; the new St. Peter's Basilica had to become the absolute, uncontested, centre of worldwide Christianity. The continuity of this theme is best illustrated by the words spoken by Nicholas V, on his deathbed in 1455, as his views on the necessity of a new St. Peter's Basilica seem to foreshadow the agenda of the Counter-Reformation:

> To create solid and stable convictions in the minds of the uncultured masses, there must be something that appeals to the eye; a proper faith, sustained only on doctrines, will never be anything but feeble and vacillating. But if the authority of the Holy See were visibly portrayed in majestic buildings, imperishable memorials and witnesses, seemingly planted by the hand of God himself, belief would grow and strengthen (quoted in Lees-Milne 1967, 124).

1.2 From Ideology to Form: The Architecture and Artworks of the Basilica

The meanings of the artworks in – and surrounding – the St. Peter's Basilica correspond with the three main ideologies underpinning the construction of the church; the new Basilica as Solomon's Temple, the triumph of the Church over paganism and the validation of the papacy and the authority of the clergy. In this section I will show how these meanings manifest themselves in a selection of artworks, which is based on what has been

imitated in the cases of the Oudenbosch, Montreal and Yamoussoukro churches. As the St. Peter's is so richly decorated there is even more to discuss beyond my selection below, however, as not everything is relevant for my analysis, much has been left out. First I will explain how the *Baldacchino* and the "original" Solomonic columns reference the plan to make the St. Peter's the new Temple. Subsequently, I will show how references to old Roman buildings, and the re-purposing of artworks from the old Basilica, allude to the Church's victory over paganism. Lastly, I will demonstrate the influence of the Counter-Reformation by discussing the *Baldacchino*, the *Cattedra Petri*, the papal monuments and St. Peter's square.

Figure 5. Southwestern pier of the dome. Donato Bramante, ca 1506-1514, Rome. The Solomonic columns can be seen above the loggia.

As mentioned in the previous section, the aim to construct a church comparable to Solomon's Temple is best illustrated by the Solomonic columns found inside the Basilica; the eight original columns which now frame relics of St. Peter in the piers of the dome (see figure 5) and columns of the same style which reappear in Bernini's *Baldacchino* (see figure 6). Another reference to the Temple can be found in a floor inscription near the entrance of the church; "Templum Vaticani" (Seely 2005, 63). Translated this means Temple of the Vatican, suggesting that the Basilica is a new version of the Temple (ibid.). The Basilica has other aspects that can be associated with the Temple, however, these are rather general and appear in other churches as well. For example the eastward orientation of the Basilica, which corresponds with the positioning of the Temple (ibid., 66-67).

Figure 6. The Baldacchino in the St. Peter's Basilica. Gian Lorenzo Bernini,1623-1634, Rome.

The triumph of the Church over paganism is roughly expressed in two ways; by referencing monuments from classical antiquity as well as by showing the continuity between the old and the new Basilica. As mentioned earlier, the designs by Bramante referenced the Pantheon and the Temple of Peace, thus emphasizing the conquering power of the Church over pagan superstition. However, it should be remarked that Bramante was inspired by other circular churches from early Christianity too. He studied the Basilica of San Lorenzo in Milan for example, a church built in the fifth century in a classical style incorporating a circular design (Lees-Milne 1967, 144). Bramante thus used a variety of classical churches to in his design to highlight the victory of the Church.

Showing the continuity between the old and new Basilica was also instrumental, because this refers to the conversion of emperor Constantine the Great (AD 272-337). Constantine was the first Christian emperor and the constructor of the old St. Peter's, and he took Christianity out of its underground status and made Christianity the state religion (ibid., 63). This defining moment in Christian history, where paganism was finally defeated, is something that the Vatican authorities like to remember. They did so by showing off and by referencing artworks from the old Basilica into the new Basilica. The *Baldacchino* is an example of such an allusion, because the old Basilica also featured a canopy at the apostle's grave (ibid., 80). Examples of the re-location of artworks from the old Basilica are the bronze statue of St. Peter and the *Cattedra* (chair) of St. Peter (ibid., 98-100).

The *Baldacchino* and the *Cattedra Petri* best illustrate the ways used to validate the papacy. To start with the *Baldacchino*, the choice to build a construct like this one over the apostle's tomb is significant. Traditionally a cloth canopy was an awning placed over a living dignitary, although the grave of the apostle was also adorned by one in the old Basilica (Mullett 1999, 200). Inspired by this Bernini made a bronze *Baldacchino* that looked like as if it was made out of cloth (see figure 6), thereby implying that the apostle is still living through the office of the pope (ibid.). Furthermore, the place – and the design – of the *Baldacchino* shows the continuity between early Christianity and the Catholic Church in the seventeenth century – the period in which the *Baldacchino* was built. As this was placed over the grave of the apostle in a Solomonic style, it represents a symbolic "foundation stone" of the Church (Mulcahy 2011, 140). Lastly, the office of the pope is once more connected to St. Peter, through decorations on top of the *Baldacchino*, including angels holding papal regalia (ibid.).

The *Cattedra Petri* also involves the apostle to confirm the legitimacy of the papacy. The monument features a chair of which it is believed that Peter sat on it when he first came to Rome (Lees-Milne 1967, 279). The chair is covered in gilded bronze, surrounded by golden

clouds that make it appear as if the chair ascends to heaven (see figure 7). Meanwhile the chair is held on high by four of the Church Fathers; two Greek saints (St. Athanasius and St. John Chrystostom) and two Latin saints (St. Ambrose and St. Augustine). Above the chair are more clouds, angels holding symbols of the papacy and an oval of rays, all depicted in gold. At the centre of the artwork an oval stained glass window showing a dove is located. The first message enclosed in the *Cattedra* concerns the angels holding papal regalia in proximity to the chair, suggesting that the seat of the apostle is in Rome and that the pope is sitting on it. Secondly, the Church Fathers supporting the chair symbolize the Catholic doctrine that the Bible alone is not enough to learn the truth, because the Bible's meaning is mediated by the Church's magisterium (Mulcahy 2011, 145). Thirdly, the back of the chair is decorated with the biblical scene "Feed my lambs; feed my sheep". This symbolizes Christ's charge to Peter to take care of the faithful, which task the pope continues (ibid.). Lastly, the stained glass image

Figure 7. The Cattedra Petri in the St. Peter's Basilica. Gian Lorenzo Bernini, 1647-1653, Rome.

depicting a dove makes it seem as if the walls of the Basilica are penetrated by celestial glory; it makes it appear as if God approves of the monument and its meanings (ibid.).

Another way in which the St. Peter's Basilica promotes the legitimacy of the papacy is the abundance of monuments construed in honour of deceased popes. Dozens of these constructions can be found throughout the church (Lees-Milne 1967, 310), each one memorizing the greatness of a past pope. They depict popes in devout or in triumphant postures and are often surrounded by allegorical figures. The monument for Alexander VII by Bernini is a great example of this phenomenon (see figure 8): Alexander sits on his knees, devoutly in prayer whilst being surrounded by allegorical women who represent charity, truth, justice and prudence. These allegories were to illustrate what virtues Alexander was known for, or at least wanted to be remembered for. Overall, the monument propagates the good and pious qualities of Alexander, seemingly proving his position as a past leader of the Church. This is but one example, however, many of such monuments inside the Basilica convey a similar message.

Figure 8. Monument for pope Alexander VII in the St. Peter's Basilica.
Gian Lorenzo Bernini, 1671-1678, Rome.

Validating the papacy was part of a larger Counter-Reformation strategy to reinstate the authority of the clergy as a whole. This effort reflects in the *Cattedra Petri* for example, where the Church Fathers represent the need for clergymen to help the pious understand the Bible. However, after the Council of Trent, one of the most efficient ways to restore the authority of the Church was by making church buildings the centre of religious life. After all, in these spaces the clergy took centre stage as celebrants. To increase lay participation in ceremonies, post-Tridentine churches had to accommodate more people and the altar had to become the most magnetic internal feature (Mullett 1999, 200). That way, architecture helped to emphasize the importance of preaching (ibid.). Moreover, church facades became more visually spectacular, both to maximize the Church's presence in towns as well as to attract people towards these buildings (ibid., 201). The St. Peter's Basilica is a great example of the convergence of these strategies. The first plans drawn for the Basilica showed a much smaller church, where Bramante and Michelangelo envisioned a Greek cross plan without a nave. However, the need for a functional church that could also accommodate large numbers of pilgrims altered this scheme, thus urging architect Carlo Maderno (1556-1629) to add a huge nave to the Basilica, between 1609 and 1626 (Castex 2008, 32), thereby transforming the floor plan into a Latin cross plan. This plan also added symbolic meaning to the church, as it visualized the Divine Sacrifice (Mulcahy 2011, 137). Maderno also designed the Basilica's huge facade in order to promote the church's presence in the city, moreover, it provides a spectacular entrance to the spiritual centre of the Roman-Catholic world (ibid.).

The square in front of the St. Peter's Basilica directly connects to the facade and prolongs the monumental entrance to the church. Its design is another example of how the Vatican has tried to increase opportunities for lay participation. The square, designed by Bernini, is shaped in an oval, and the ground slopes gently upwards from the centre towards the edges of the square, where colonnades with statues of saints, popes, martyrs and founders of monastic orders surround the space (see figure 9; Castex 2008, 34). The size – and the bowl shape – of the square allows for almost 250.000 people to have a good view of the facade of the Basilica, the place where papal ceremonies are performed (ibid.). Besides this practical quality of the square, there are also multiple symbolisms enclosed in its design. Firstly, Bernini chose an oval shape to mirror the outline of Michelangelo's dome (ibid.). Secondly, the curved colonnades, with an opening at the opposite side of the façade, symbolize the Church's maternal arms embracing believers who visit the Basilica (Mulcahy 2011, 147; Castex 2008, 34). The square thus has a highly practical purpose; to provide a suitable entrance to the church, attracting visitors towards the Basilica and accommodating vast

numbers of pilgrims. On the other hand, it is a symbolic work of art; by referencing the dome and "embracing" the believers in the spiritual heart of the Church.

The architecture and the artworks of the Basilica easily evoke a feeling of awe on beholders because of its three intertwining elements; beauty, gigantism and symbolic meaning. This wow-effect in the design of the Basilica broadly has two functions; it provides a movement towards God, Jesus and other holy figures, and it teaches the beholder that the Basilica is the ultimate centre of Christianity. The first function is not exclusive to the St. Peter's as it is present in any other Catholic church, however, the second function is special to St. Peter's Basilica. To start with the element of beauty, the aesthetics of the Basilica are specifically meant to induce emotions, as baroque artworks, such as the *Cattedra Petri* and the *Baldacchino,* amaze the eye of the beholder with their use of exquisite materials and their dazzling fluid forms (Mullett 1999, 198). To overwhelm the senses with beauty was part of the Vatican's agenda, meant to transport visitors into another world and into the glory of heaven (Mulcahy 2011, 134). The gigantic scale of the Basilica adds another dimension to the

Figure 9. St. Peter's Square. Gian Lorenzo Bernini, 1656-1667, Rome.

feeling of awe. The huge size of the building, and its artworks, sweeps visitors of their feet and asserts the power of the Vatican. The size of a religious building is often an indicator of dominance in a certain area, as a community with great power will be able to build large religious buildings, whereas a group with little power will have to settle with small, or even no, buildings (Hayden and Walker 2013, 413). Symbolic meaning is the last aspect that contributes to the experience of the wow. The meaning behind the *Cattedra Petri* and the *Baldacchino,* for example, that the pope is the successor of St. Peter, is a highly sacred message that is hard to grasp for the beholder, thereby inducing a wow-effect.

1.3 Legacy of the St. Peter's: Religious, Political and Artistic Aesthetic Formations

The message of the St. Peter's being the centre of Christianity was conveyed very successfully. Three aspects of this effect are particularly illustrative: The building became an icon of Roman Catholic power, rulers aspiring to demonstrate their Christian identity borrowed elements from the Basilica and the church inspired architects to use design for the transmission of certain beliefs. Besides that, the St. Peter's became a "school" where artists came to observe and learn. In this section I will discuss how these elements are the fundamentals of the St. Peter's legacy. As will be shown, the sensory experiences of the St. Peter's has the ability to bind people together, not only in a religious aesthetic formation but also on political and artistic levels.

The best indicator that the St. Peter's has succeeded in expressing the power and the universality of the Vatican is probably its iconic status. As already explained in the introductory chapter, the Basilica's image represents certain symbolic meanings, the most prominent of which is the power of the papacy. However, the meanings enclosed in the Basilica's decorations, arts and materials are so abundant, that most visitors do not understand the inundation of encoded meanings they are exposed to. Yet, the building is able to make people understand that it is the centre of Roman Catholicism by its gigantism, its richness and its history. For instance, anyone can see that the foot of St. Peter's statue has eroded over time because thousands of hands have touched it over the centuries. Consequently, anyone comprehends that this touching is a ritual of the highest sacrality and importance. The most iconic feature of the St. Peter's is probably the front view of the Basilica, which incorporates Bernini's colonnades, the facade and the dome. The dome is especially iconic, as it can be recognized from a great distance as a marker of the Basilica. The power of this image is illustrated by the souvenirs produced in mass that display the image of the St. Peter's as seen from its front.

Ever since the seventeenth century the iconic power of the building was recognized when architects started to borrow and imitate elements from the St. Peter's into their own designs. This happened despite criticism on the building. To name a few points of critique; the Basilica appears to be smaller than that it actually is, the giant walls and pillars have a hulking effect (Etlin 2005, 270) and its facade is too broad and congested (Lees-Milne 1967, 239). However, the power associated with this building was attractive to many rulers eager to show their supremacy. What has probably been borrowed the most, is Bramante's idea of placing the dome of the Pantheon over a version of the Temple of Peace. This had imbued the Basilica with imperial Roman imagery, which was deemed perfect to demonstrate power as such (Etlin 2005, 273). A more recent example of how this was adapted, is the Capitol in Washington D.C., whose majestic dome radiates authority (ibid., 293). Moreover, if rulers wanted even more obvious associations with the St. Peter's, they would add an iconic element such as a *Baldacchino*. This happened in the case of the Dôme des Invalides in Paris for example, which was commissioned by Louis XIV in order to position himself as "the most Christian King" (ibid., 272).

Besides the associations with the might of Rome, architects were inspired by the way the architecture and artworks were used to promote certain beliefs (Millon 1961, 9). How the Basilica tells a story, from the colonnades on the square to the *Cattedra Petri* at the end of the nave, was reproduced in several cities telling different stories. Generally, the St. Peter's popularized the view on architecture as being a "theatre" where design captures the imagination and where people get to participate in certain roles (Norberg-Schulz 1979, 10). Especially the square and the facade of the St. Peter's can be regarded as one of the first examples of this phenomenon. Pilgrims can gather on the square in the "embrace" of Bernini's colonnades, whilst the pope performs a ceremony from the facade of the St. Peter's, both as the literal and figurative head of the Church. Bernini's design showed how practical and meaningful a great square design could be. For this reason, spacious squares and elaborate facades became a motif in baroque cities all over Europe, meant to engage passers-by in certain theatrical stories, for instance the Plaza Major in Madrid and the Amalienborg in Copenhagen (Mignon 1999, 327-328).

Even though the art and architecture of the St. Peter's is all about meaning, the building is also admired purely for its aesthetic qualities. As many of Italy's most famous artists, such as Rafael, Michelangelo and Bernini, worked on the Basilica, the building attracts people from all over the world who wish to see the resulting beauty, craftsmanship and treasures of the St. Peter's rather than to be swayed by its religious meanings. Nonetheless,

the religious connotations add to the artistic experience, as it allows the artwork to become more than just material (Bartmański and Alexander 2012). The symbolic power enclosed in the artworks is always emphasized by the continuous presence of the many Catholic pilgrims. Overall, the legacy of the St. Peter's extends beyond its position as Catholicism's most holy place, because it has also become a place to enjoy a purely aesthetic experience. In summary, the Basilica became an icon of spiritual power, of temporal power and of the Roman baroque art style, and therefore has the ability to bind groups of people together in aesthetic formations on, sometimes, intertwining, levels.

1.4 Chapter Conclusion

The St. Peter's construction incorporates roughly three ideologies: The Basilica as the new Temple of Solomon, as the triumph of Christianity over paganism and as a validation of the papacy and other Counter-Reformation ideals. All these ideas support one overarching theme: The St. Peter's being the absolute centre of Christianity. Various architectural elements and artworks are expressive of these ideologies; the Solomonic columns demonstrate the link with the Temple, whilst the *Cattedra Petri* illustrates the legitimacy of the papacy. The success of the St. Peter's ability to communicate these messages is shown by the Basilica's legacy, since it became *the* icon of Roman Catholicism, as designers expressed power and piety through references to the Basilica, and because architects borrowed architectural elements to express certain beliefs. In addition, the building became a "school for artists". This legacy shows that the St. Peter's architecture can be associated with different experiences from multiple perspectives, thus illustrating the possibility of various aesthetic formations around the same medium.

2. A Phenomenology of the Holy Agatha and Barbara Basilica in Oudenbosch: Pastor Hellemons's Project

Introduction

To understand how the design of the Holy Agatha and Barbara relates to the St. Peter's, it is essential to attain an understanding of the context of its construction and how this imitation was executed. Moreover, how does the case of Oudenbosch compare to other instances of St. Peter imitation? Are there recurring themes in the construction of such buildings? In this chapter I will delve into the case of the Holy Agatha and Barbara in order to find out how this church involves itself with the aesthetic formations surrounding the St. Peter's. First I will examine what the context of the construction was; what were the main motivations for its construction and what is the position of the building in the Netherlands? Then I will move on to an analysis of the Basilica's similarities and differences with the St. Peter's, followed by a section where I will compare the church to my additional case studies in Montreal and Yamoussoukro. This part will show how the Holy Agatha and Barbara shares some characteristics with these churches, but that there are significant differences between these too.

2.1 Context of the Construction of the Basilica: Pastor Hellemons's Story

In the early 1860's pastor Willem Hellemons of Oudenbosch concluded that his parish was in need of a new church building. Until then, the parish used an old church, originating from the fifteenth century (De Valk 2012, 245). However, this building was decaying and Hellemons had calculated that, in fifty years time, the church would be too small to host his growing parish (Van Casteren 1970, 59). The architect Pierre Cuypers initially investigated whether the old church could be restored, but he concluded that this would not be worth the effort and that it would be wise to build a new church instead (ibid.; De Valk 2012, 245). It is important to note that both Cuypers and Hellemons had an interest in the construction of a new church; it was a possible commission for Cuypers and Hellemons had started to fantasize about constructing a piece of Rome in his own village by then. Nevertheless, sources do not

confirm this explicitly. Once Cuypers had given his advise, Hellemons started developing his ideas about constructing an imitation of the St. Peter's and the St. John Lateran Basilica.

Multiple, intersecting, reasons constituted Hellemons wish to construct a small St. Peter's. First of all, Hellemons was an ultramontanist who wanted to express his loyalty to the pope. Ultramontanism, which is a Catholic movement that advocates the supreme authority of the pope, was very popular in the Netherlands during the second half of the nineteenth century. This popularity can on the one hand be explained by the religious freedom the Dutch Catholics received after 1848. In that year a new constitution was effected, a constitution in which Catholics were given equal rights to the Protestant population, which meant that Catholics were again free to celebrate the pope as their (spiritual) leader (De Valk 1998, 129). On the other hand, the papacy was in crisis during the 1860's due to Italian nationalists who wanted to unite Italy into one country. This meant that the pope would lose his authority over several regions in middle Italy which constituted the Papal State (Van Casteren 1970, 67). To protect his lands, the pope called young Catholic men to Rome to fight as "zouaves" in his army (ibid., 68). This crisis in the Papal State triggered the ultramontane tendencies of pastor Hellemons, as he decided to make Oudenbosch a transit centre for the Dutch zouaves (De Valk 2012, 244). He subsequently facilitated accommodation and transport for them (ibid.), which proves Hellemons's ultramontanism before the actual construction of the new church. Imitating the St. Peter's and the St. John Lateran churches was a further expression of his loyalty to the pope, as these are the two most important churches in Roman Catholicism (Van Casteren 1970, 60).[3] The second reason for Hellemons obsession with the St. Peter's Basilica and the St. John Lateran Basilica can be found in his personal connection to these churches. During his priest training in Rome, he became impressed with these churches, and to reconstruct these in his own parish would give him a "religious memory" of the days he spent in that city (quoted in Van Casteren 1970, 60). The third reason concerns Hellemons belief in the sacred nature of the great Roman churches. In one of his sermons he explained this as follows:

What deviates from Rome, to that I am cold and even more than indifferent and my inner feelings say that he who builds after the example of the Roman church, draws from the *true source*. (…) The churches of Rome that have been newly built and established under the supervision of the pope, I have always regarded as designs descended from Heaven and inspired

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[3]   The St. Peter's and the St. John Lateran Basilica are the two highest ranking churches in Roman Catholicism. The St. Peter's because it is the parish church of the pope and the St. John Lateran because it is the bishop's church of the diocese Rome.

into the Vicar of Christ by the Holy Spirit (quoted in Van Casteren 1970, 60; translation L.V.; italics added).

He thus regards a church like the St. Peter's as the result of divine inspiration (ibid.; De Blaauw 2002, 358 and De Valk 2012, 245), a belief that is not unique to Hellemons as it has been present amongst Catholics since at least the sixteenth century (Lees-Milne 1967, 46-47). For Hellemons this implied that it would be right to base a church design only on the Roman examples he cherished so much. The fourth and final reason for Hellemons's choice for an imitation is the arrangement of space in the St. Peter's. He wanted a design that would allow his parishioners to see the altar from every angle in the church, and he thought that a small version of the St. Peter's floor plan would provide the best option to attain this (Van Casteren 1970, 60).

Pierre Cuypers became the architect of the new church and, in conjunction with Hellemons, he made a design in which the entire interior of the church and the dome were based on the St. Peter's and the facade on the example of St. John Lateran. The construction started in 1865 and in 1880 the church was ready to be used and consecrated (ibid., 61). At that moment, the church still needed decorations and the facade was lacking, which would eventually be finished in 1892 by Gerardus van Swaay (ibid., 64). The embellishment of the church took a very long time due to continuous financial problems. In 1880 the interior was white and rather bare, with only a few frescoes, statues and the altar from the old church present (De Valk 2012, 246). In 1884, just before Hellemons's death, the "papal" altar and the *Baldacchino* were placed (ibid., 246-247). The new pastor, Hugo Rovers, (1884-1904) finished the square in front of the church in the 1890's. Further decorations to the interior were added until the financial crisis of the 1930's and the Second World War intervened (ibid., 247). Even the general maintenance of the church was neglected in those years, which resulted in the building's serious decay in the 1950's (Van Casteren 1970, 65). However, a restoration, which took place between circa 1959 and 1990, saved the church and gave the interior its current grandiose look (De Valk 2012, 248).

The construction of the Holy Agatha and Barbara was an extraordinary achievement at the time for several reasons. Firstly, the sheer size of the building was uncommon in the Netherlands. During the nineteenth century only two other churches have been built that were bigger than the Basilica of Oudenbosch: The Cathedral of St. Bavo in Haarlem[4] and the St. Willebrord Buiten de Veste in Amsterdam (Van Casteren 1970, 61). In addition, the dome

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[4]   Not to be mistaken for the St. Bavo Church (Great Church) in Haarlem, which is a medieval church.

remained the biggest highly placed dome in the country at least until the 1970's (ibid., 64). Secondly, it is remarkable that a small village, such as Oudenbosch, was able to finance the construction of this church. To illustrate, in 1860 only 3.000 people were living in Oudenbosch,[5] whereas a town such as Haarlem, where the Cathedral of St. Bavo was built, approximately had 20.000 inhabitants in those days.[6] The funding for the Oudenbosch Basilica mainly came from two sources; Hellemons depended heavily on local benefactors who donated greatly (ibid., 59) and he also asked his parishioners to contribute (ibid., 61). Still, he left his successor with a debt of 160.000 guilders (De Valk 2012, 247). The church was given the status of a Basilica minor in 1912 by pope Pius X, a standing that nowadays only belongs to 26 other Dutch churches (Van Casteren 1970, 65). The Basilica is also recognized as a site of Dutch cultural heritage, as the building has been acknowledged by the Dutch state as a "rijksmonument" (national monument).

2.2 The Art and Architecture of the Basilica: Many Similarities, Some Differences

The similarities between the Holy Agatha and Barbara and the St. Peter's are the most apparent when looking at its dome and several interior decorations. These are close imitations of the examples in Rome, however these are smaller, built using different, cheaper materials and the proportions have been altered. The differences with the St. Peter's, however, are best illustrated by the facade and multiple statues in- and outside the Basilica. These elements are either based on those of the St. John Lateran Basilica or on local figures and events. The similarities and differences constitute an interesting dynamic in the meaning of the Basilica: On the one hand the building constitutes a monument of support and loyalty to the Vatican, whilst on the other hand the differences call attention to local history and its heroes. In this section I will discuss what the similarities and differences with the St. Peter's Basilica are and how they reflect these two meanings. The imitated elements of the Holy Agatha and Barbara basically serve two functions: To bring the glory of Rome to Oudenbosch and to express loyalty to the pope. In order to bring a piece of Rome to the village the most iconic aspects of the St. Peter's were imitated, such as the dome, the *Baldacchino*, the *Cattedra Petri*, St. Peter's statue and St. Peter's square. Like the one in Rome, the dome has a big presence over its surroundings and it has therefore the same iconic effect on people in the sense that they can associate its image with the Catholic Church from afar (see figure 10). Inside the church, the close imitations of the *Baldacchino*, the *Cattedra Petri*, St. Peter's statue and the paintings on

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[5]   "Hoe komt die Romeinse kerk hier?" *Visithalderberge.com*, n.d., accessed July 20, 2020.
[6]   "Geschiedenis van de gemeente Haarlem," *Noord-hollandsarchief.nl*, n.d., accessed July 20, 2020.

the dome (see figure 11 and 12) create an unmistakable link with the Roman Basilica. However, the artworks are not made out of Bronze like in Rome, instead these were made using gypsum or painted wood as to make these look to look the same (De Valk 2012, 246; see figure 13, 14, 15 and 16). The same tactic was used for the general decoration of the Basilica, such as the painted walls and pilasters, which simulate the marble of the St. Peter's. With regard to the square in front of the church, this originally referenced Bernini's square with statues on top of curved walls (see figure 19). However, in the 1950's the square was demolished because the statues and the walls were in decay (De Valk 2012, 248) and the space was repurposed to make room for parking spots (see figure 20).

Figure 10. The dome of the Holy Agatha and Barbara Basilica (Pierre Cuypers, ca 1865-1880, Oudenbosch) on the left. The smaller dome on the right belongs to the chappel of St. Louis (C. J. Swaay, 1865-1866, Oudenbosch).

The imitations of the *Baldacchino*, *Cattedra Petri* and the statue of St. Peter most clearly express the support for the Vatican. Inside the St. Peter's these monuments validate the pope as the successor of the apostle through the use of his tomb, relics and papal symbolisms. The reproduction of these monuments inside the Oudenbosch Basilica reflect this meaning; it is a re-telling of the narrative of the St. Peter's. However, in the case of the C*attedra Petri,* the designers made a notable alteration: Instead of imitating St. Peter's chair, they decided to use an imitation of the tabernacle of the St. Peter's chapel of the Blessed Sacrament in its place (see figure 17 and 18). In the St. Peter's the tabernacle is a reference to Bramante's tempietto that inspired the design of this church (Lees-Milne 1967, 237-238) and it also stresses the dogma of transubstantiation in the liturgy of the mass (Mulcahy 2011,149). The placing of the

Figure 11. Interior of the dome of the St. Peter's Basilica. Cavalier d'Arpino, ca 1620, Rome.

Figure 12. Interior of the Dome of the Holy Agatha and Barbara Basilica. Kees Raaymakers, 1931-1936, Oudenbosch.

tabernacle at the spot of St. Peter's chair at the Oudenbosch Basilica can be regarded as an expression of the need for the clergy in religious life, not only the need for the pope. After all, in the previous chapter it was explained that the Church Fathers expressed the necessity of the clergy in understanding God's word by holding up the chair. In addition, the tabernacle preserves the Eucharist, which only priests can distribute, thus stressing the importance of Catholic authorities.
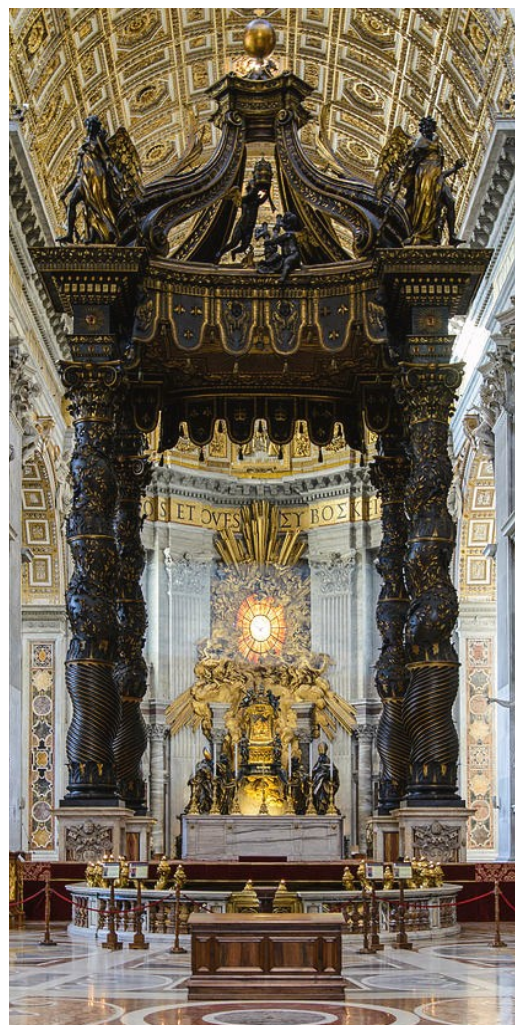
Figure 13 and 14: The Baldacchino of The Holy Agatha and Barbara on the left (unknown, 1884, Oudenbosch) and the Baldacchino of the St. Peter's on the right.

Besides the alterations on the materials used and the *Cattedra Petri*, the main deviations from the St. Peter's are the changes in proportion, the facade and statues or memorials for Oudenbosch's local history. It is striking that these modifications appear at places where the design of the St. Peter's often gets criticized: Its dome and facade (De Blaauw 2002, 361; Lees-Milne 1967, 239-241). The critique regarding the dome concerns its lack of visibility from the square in front of the church (Lees-Milne 1967, 241). The dome

lacks height, because it is a hemisphere, and the huge facade hides the drum from view (see figure 21). Moreover, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the facade is also disapproved of because it is too congested and over-weight (ibid., 239). With regard to the dome, the architect Cuypers decided to make it a bit more slender and taller compared to the Roman one, in order to make the dome easier to see from the streets below (Van Casteren 1970, 64). The facade of the St. Peter's did not appear in Hellemons's plan for the new church. From the beginning he preferred to imitate the facade of the St. John Lateran Basilica (Van Casteren 1970, 60). However, he was also motivated to imitate this facade to show his respect for the St. John Lateran as the head church of Roman Catholicism (ibid.).

Figure 15 and 16. The Statue of St. Peter inside the St. Peter's Basilica (Arnolfo di Cambio, ca 1250-1300, Rome) on the left and the statue of St. Peter inside the Holy Agatha and Barbara Basilica (Frans de Vriendt, ca 1890- 1909, Oudenbosch) on the right.

The memorials for Oudenbosch's local history are mostly statues that can be found on top of the facade and in the interior of the church. Some overlap with the St. John Lateran and the St. Peter's, whereas others are unique to Oudenbosch. The statues of Bernardus of Clairvaux, St. Benedictus, St. Agatha and St. Barbara are the most notable references to the

local history of the Basilica: The old church of Oudenbosch was dedicated to Agatha and Barbara as is the new church. Bernardus of Clairvaux is relevant because he started a monastery for Cistercians in Clairvaux, France,[7] which spread north to the Dutch region between Breda and Bergen op Zoom. Oudenbosch was originally part of the parish of Oud Gastel, which became the first Cistercian parish in the Diocese of Breda.[8] Nowadays, the parish of Oudenbosch is named after Bernardus of Clairvaux, which refers to this history like the statue atop of the facade. The statue of St. Benedict is related to this past, as the Cistercians followed his rules.[9]

Figure 17 and 18: The tabernacle of the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament (Gian Lorenzo Bernini, 1674, Rome) on the right and the tabernacle in Oudenbosch (Frans de Vriendt, ca 1904, Oudenbosch) on the left.

Inside the Basilica statues of Bernardus of Clairvaux, St. Benedict, St. Agatha and St. Barbara can also be found. Other differences with the interior of the St. Peter's are the use of paintings and the floor. The Basilica contains paintings of the Stations of the Cross, which are not found in the Roman Basilica. Besides, the "paintings" inside the St. Peter's are actually mosaic replicas. The actual paintings were taken down in the seventeenth century and

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[7]   "Heilige Bernardus van Clairvaux," *Bernardusparochie.nl*, n.d., accessed July 17, 2020.
[8]   Ibid.
[9]   "Hoeveel beelden staan er op de voorgevel en wie stellen die beelden voor?" *Stichtingbehoudbasiliek.nl*, n.d., accessed July 17, 2020.

replaced by mosaics in order to preserve these paintings for the future (Arletti and Vezzalini 2011, 365). However, the Oudenbosch Basilica has actual mosaics on its floor. The floor is made out of terrazzo, with mosaics details in various places (see figure 22).[10] Although these elements constitute some clear differences with the St. Peter's, they are executed in a similar baroque style reminiscent of the Basilica in Rome.

Figure 19. Photo from the 1920's showing the original square in front of the Holy Agatha and Barbara Basilica. Unknown, ca 1904-1935, Oudenbosch.

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[10] "Waar is de vloer van de Basiliek eigenlijk van gemaakt ?" *Stichtingbehoudbasiliek.nl*, n.d., accessed July 20, 2020.

Figure 20. Contemporary photo of the Holy Agatha and Barbara and the square in front of it.

Figure 21. The dome is partly hid from view in front of the basilica, because it lacks height and the facade (Carlo Manderno, 1608-1614, Rome) further obscures it.

Figure 22. Detail of the terazzo floor in the Holy Agatha and Barbara Basilica. Unknown Italian artists, 1904, Oudenbosch.

2.3 Oudenbosch Compared to the Larger Practice of St. Peter Imitation: The Cases of Montreal and Yamoussoukro

When comparing the two other case studies to the Holy Agatha and Barbara, the similarities with the Mary, Queen of the World Cathedral stands out the most. Like in Oudenbosch, this church features many imitated artworks that echo the St. Peter's message of the papacy's legitimacy. The Cathedral can be easily recognized from the outside as an imitation of the St. Peter's, because of its iconic dome and facade (see figure 2). Inside the church, more obvious references to the St. Peter's can be found, such as the *Baldacchino,* which is just as detailed as the one in the Holy Agatha and Barbara (see figure 23). Unlike Oudenbosch however, this cathedral does not contain an imitation of the *Cattedra Petri*. Still, the decorations clearly reflect the ones inside of the St. Peter's; they may be less lavish and detailed, but are still easily recognizable as imitations, with the vaulted ceiling and the paintings on the inside of the dome as examples (see figure 24). The most obvious

expressions of support for the papacy are the inscriptions alongside the walls of the church, which read the same as in Rome: "You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven." To underscore this message even more, St. Peter's keys are painted underneath the inscriptions.

The motivations to build this church are akin to the situation in Oudenbosch. Firstly, both buildings were commissioned by clergymen who were fascinated by the St. Peter's. Montreal's bishop, Mgr. Ignace Bourget, had been a fan of the baroque style for a long time, however, after a visit to Rome in 1854, he was so captivated by St. Peter's Basilica that he conceived the plan of reconstructing this church in his own town (Gowans 1955, 11). This background resembles the story of Hellemons's passion for the St. Peter's, who also became enchanted with this church during his training days in Rome. Secondly, both men were convinced ultramontanists who wanted to express their support of the Vatican. Bourget wanted his parish to host a strong symbol of loyalty to the pope, and following the Roman church designs was the best way to demonstrate this for him (ibid., 9; Marsan 1990, 207). Thirdly, the context of the Risorgimento played a role in the execution of Bourget's plans. Before 1867 there were many new churches built in a baroque style in Canada (Gowans 1955). However, there was no apparent enthusiasm for the construction of an imitation of the St. Peter's right away (ibid., 11). This changed in 1867 when Rome was besieged and zouaves were recruited for the papal army worldwide (ibid., 13). In this context, people were eager to express their devotion to the Vatican and Bourget's plan could now be carried out (ibid.). Finally, there are many artworks in the Cathedral that commemorate the local history of the parish, just like in Oudenbosch. For example, there are interior paintings that honour the parish's heroes from the colonial settlement of Montreal (Wilkinson 2010, 12), as well as statues on top of the facade which represent the patron saints of the parishes that donated statues to this church (ibid, 10).

Nonetheless, there is one important difference in the case of the Mary, Queen of the World Cathedral compared to the Oudenbosch Basilica: The influence of a high stakes political agenda. The Montreal Catholics had to deal with a large Protestant population, and constructing a cathedral symbolized the establishment of their branch of Christianity in their city. The baroque style was best suited for this program, as the Protestants distinguished their churches by using Gothicism (Gowans 1955, 9). Moreover, nothing could be more expressive of the Catholic tradition than the St. Peter's, the ultimate icon of the Church. Thusly the construction of the new cathedral was meant to ensure the parish's survival and growth in a

Figure 23. The Baldacchino inside the Mary, Queen of the World Cathedral. Joseph-Arthur Vincent, 1900, Montreal.

Figure 24. Dome of the Mary, Queen of the World Cathedral. Unknown, n,d., Montreal.

religiously divided city. This situation cannot be compared with Oudenbosch, because this village, and the larger region of the southern Netherlands was dominated by Catholics. Although the Catholic community still faced some opposition from Protestants in the Netherlands, this manifested itself more in the northern, Protestant, regions of the country (Rogier and De Rooy 1953, 255). The focus of this opposition was mostly on processions (Margry 2000) and the "Catholic" building style, as Catholics had appropriated the Gothic style from the Middle Ages – their golden age – to construct new church buildings (Margry 2002, 74). In the sphere of architecture, the main outburst of Protestant opposition centred on Pierre Cuypers's Gothic design for the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. They found the style ill-suited for public buildings, such as this museum, because it indicated a connection to the Catholic emancipation whilst neglecting Protestant characteristics (Margry 2000, 154). Such events of public outcry did influence the construction of the Basilica in the sense that it was a welcome, yet careless sign of loyalty to the pope (De Valk 2012, 252). However, my investigation on what had already been written and my archival research in Oudenbosch indicates that Protestants had no direct influence on the construction of the new church. There are no known sources that explain the absence of Protestant opposition, nonetheless, a potential reason may be the fact that the Protestant community in Oudenbosch was rather small (Ruis 2013, 45) and thus could not stand up against the Catholic majority in Oudenbosch, nor to the Catholic community in the Southern Netherlands in general. Based on this, I conclude that there is a difference between Montreal and Oudenbosch, as the stakes associated to the construction in Oudenbosch were not as high as the ones in Canada; in Oudenbosch Catholics did not have to fear for their survival amidst rivalling religious communities.

There are fewer similarities between the Holy Agatha and Barbara Basilica and the Our Lady of Peace in Yamoussoukro. However, these still need to be considered as these illustrate the recurring themes in the process of St. Peter imitation. The idea for the construction of this church came from the Ivory Coast's former President, Felix Houphouët-Boigny, who ordered architect Fakhoury to build an imitation of the St. Peter's. As was the case in Oudenbosch, the church in Ivory Coast was an attempt to perfect the design of the St. Peter's. Cuypers did this by altering the proportions of the dome and by using the facade of the St. John Lateran. Fakhoury applied almost the same strategy. Firstly, he designed the dome to be much bigger: With a width of 90 meters, the dome twice as big as the St. Peter's, which spans 42 meters (see figure 25; Elleh 2002, 53). Secondly, he took inspiration from the Pantheon for the facade and the floor plan (ibid., 119). Like the Basilica in Oudenbosch is a

hybrid combination of the St. John Lateran and the St. Peter's, the Our Lady of Peace is a combination of the St. Peter's and the Pantheon. Thirdly, Fakhoury used the design of Bernini's colonnades for the square in front of the church but simplified it (Praeg 2017, 101). Overall, the architect "improved" on the most criticized features of the St. Peter's by altering proportions and by removing unnecessary complexities (see figure 25; ibid., 99). The second similarity with the Holy Agatha and Barbara Basilica concerns the artworks and decorations that celebrate the local history and context of the church. There is a glass stained window that depicts Houphouët-Boigny[11] (see figure 26; Elleh 2002, 108) and images of African wildlife and vegetation can be found throughout the church (ibid., 118). Also many local building materials have been used to emphasize the African identity of the Basilica. Nevertheless, these references to the local history should not be exaggerated, as all other saintly figures in the Basilica look European (ibid., 108) and, except for the image of the president, there are no African people represented in the Basilica (ibid.).

Figure 25. Comparison of the St. Peter's and the Our Lady of Peace Basilica.

As is the case in Canada, the differences between the Our Lady of Peace and the Holy Agatha and Barbara appear when one considers the political agenda on which the construction of the former was based. The main idea was to demonstrate the greatness of the president whilst simultaneously covering up his mismanagement and corruption (ibid., 1). He developed a threefold plan to attain these goals. Firstly, the president framed the project as a religious mission in order to spur sympathy amongst the people of Ivory Coast (ibid.). Secondly, he chose to imitate the St. Peter's, because its design demonstrates its centrality in

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[11] This also builds on the Renaissance tradition where patrons are depicted in artworks, often with the objective of controlling and improving their image (Schroeder and Borgerson 2002, 154).

Christian life throughout the world, which is exactly what Houphouët-Boigny wanted to associate himself with (ibid., 67). In order to echo the narrative of the St. Peter's into the Our Lady of Peace, this church features some of the most iconic elements of the St. Peter's, such as the dome, Bernini's colonnades and the *Baldacchino* (see figure 27). The third step was to emulate the St. Peter's. As mentioned above, the dome of the Our Lady of Peace is bigger than the one of the St. Peter's. In addition, the Basilica in Yamoussoukro is taller than the St. Peter's with a height of 158 meters compared to a height of 123 meters (see figure 25; ibid., 56). This last step was crucial to demonstrate the president's power (ibid., 53); he showed he could even outdo the greatest Catholic church in the world.

Figure 26. Glass stained window in the Our Lady of Peace Basilica. Éric Bonte, ca 1985-1990, Yamoussoukro. The dark skinned figure represents former president Houphouët-Boigny.

The motive of demonstrating Houphouët-Boigny's power and greatness resulted in a church that is a lesser close imitation of the St. Peter's compared to the churches in Oudenbosch and Montreal. The iconic features of the St. Peter's are there to echo its centrality in the Catholic world, however, these elements are simplified or are decorated in a distinct way. These differences express the unique character of this church by alluding to the local context of the Basilica.

This comparative analysis of the three churches shows that there are three recurring motives in the construction of a St. Peter's imitation: Ultramontane feelings, personal connections to Rome and the presence of a high stakes political agenda. However, all cases illustrate respect for local histories too. These three cases show that the motives determine how the imitations are executed, as the nineteenth century ultramontanism of Hellemons and Bourget resulted in very close imitations of the St. Peter's that praise the authority of the pope. Ultramontanism was lacking in the case of Ivory Coast, where instead a high stakes political agenda took precedence; the aim of expressing the president's eminence led to a church that used the iconic features of the St. Peter's, while simultaneously emphasizing Houphouët-Boigny's connection to the church. This strategy fits into the larger tradition of using the St. Peter's to express both spiritual and temporal power, as was demonstrated in the previous chapter.
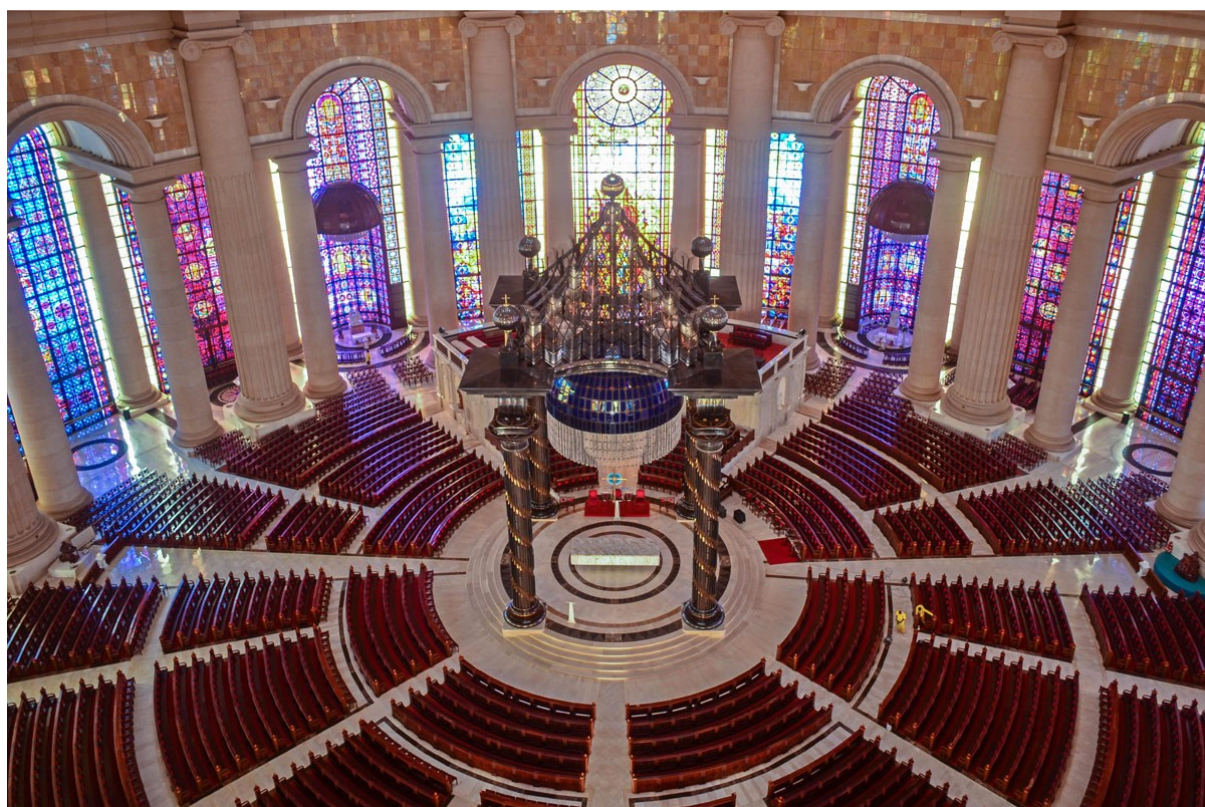
Figure 27. The Baldacchino inside the Our Lady of Peace Basilica. Pierre Fakhoury, ca 1985-1990, Yamoussoukro.

2.4 Chapter Conclusion: The St. Peter's as *the* Icon of Roman Catholicism

In this chapter I have explained what the main motivations were for the construction of the Holy Agatha and Barbara. Pastor Hellemons wanted to express his ultramontane feelings, he had a personal connection to the Roman churches, he believed in the sacredness of the

Roman designs and he simply liked the arrangement of space in the St. Peter's. These motivations resulted in imitations of the dome, the *Baldacchino*, the *Cattedra Petri* and the interior decorations. Nevertheless, the Basilica also honours its local history through localized memorials, paintings and statues, resulting in the twofold message of both loyalty to the Vatican and reverence for local heroes. Compared to the churches in Montreal and Yamoussoukro, multiple similarities can be discerned here: The role of ultramontanism, the presence of a personal connection with the St. Peter's, respect for local histories and attempts to "improve" the St. Peter's design. However, the Holy Agatha and Barbara stands out as a high stakes political agenda was lacking, whereas the two other churches were definitely products of such a scheme.

3. A Spiritual Account of The Holy Agatha and Barbara: Imitation as Part of the Catholic Experience

Introduction

In this chapter I study from a *religious perspective* how the experience of the Holy Agatha and Barbara is influenced by, or influences, the St. Peter's as the central medium in the aesthetic formation of Roman Catholicism. First, I analyse what the Church's authorities's stance is on church architecture and imitation. Their approval or rejection of the phenomenon is a first step that needs to be taken in order to illuminate how the imitations influence the aesthetic formation of Roman Catholicism, because they dictate how sensational forms should be experienced (Meyer 2015, 20). Based on the canons and decrees of the Council of Trent (1545-1563), the constitutions of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and the Catechism of the Catholic Church, I will show that, since the sixteenth century, the Church has had minimal requirements for church architecture whilst practices of imitation were already accepted as educative means and as promoters of piety. In the second part of this chapter I will reflect on the effects of imitation on religious experiences. Building on a sermon by Hellemons and the works of Ankur Datta (2019), Colleen McDannel (1995), James Bielo (2017) and Rhoda Woets (2017), I argue that the imitated elements of the Holy Agatha and Barbara have four effects: They remind people of the original in Rome, they evoke what I call an auxiliary wow-effect, they enhance the symbolic capital of the building and they promote devotion to the St. Peter's itself. Overall, my analysis will show that the religious experience of the imitation strengthens the focus of the believer on the St. Peter's.

3.1 The Church on Architecture and Imitation: Imitation as Part of the Catholic Experience

On the surface it may seem evident that Catholics, like practitioners of any other religious belief, use imitations to practice their faith. After all, are not all ceremonies and prayers – be these Catholic, Protestant or Muslim – imitations of an already established and authorized procedure? (Meyer 2015, 20). This might very well be the case, but it still appears that imitation is a sensitive matter regarding these traditions. Amongst Protestants, for

example, it is debated whether one can become a good Christian by imitating Christ, because the chasm between Christ's exceptional exemplarity and the ordinary life of the imitator is found to be too great, hence problematic (Agan 2013; Tinsley 1972 and Vos 2017). In the Islamic tradition imitations of the Kaaba regularly cause serious commotion. These imitations are often construed to practice for the Hajj, while the legitimacy of this is disputed. To illustrate this, a senior Indian Mufti, Salim Noori, issued a fatwa in 2016 against an imitation in Kenya where people were practising for the Hajj.[12] Also, there are many instances where a Kaaba was erected without religious purposes, or where a building accidentally resembled the Kaaba (O'Meara 2018), which always invokes criticism by Muslim authorities. These examples show that the use – and approval – of imitations is not self-evident in religious traditions and therefore this section aims at finding out how this practice works for Roman Catholicism. As I am particularly interested in the imitation of the St. Peter's, I will look at the most important documents on doctrine effected during, or after, the construction of the Roman Basilica: The canons and decrees of the Council of Trent (1545-1563), the constitutions of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

The Church does not provide direct recommendations on matters of imitated church architecture, however, the issue is mainly dealt with when it comes to religious art. For his reason, I have split this analysis in two parts: A review of the guidelines on church architecture, which disclose the basic requirements, and an evaluation of the recommendations for religious art where the practice of imitation is tackled. To start with the rules for architecture, the Catechism contains the most straightforward instructions, although these are minimal and are left open to interpretation. The Catechism describes the requirements for building a church in the section "Where is the Liturgy Celebrated?"[13] This text shows that the focus is first and foremost on the community of believers, who themselves form a "house of God", indicating that a physical church building is of secondary importance:

> What matters above all is that, when the faithful assemble in the same place, they are the "living stones," gathered to be "built into a spiritual house." For the Body of the risen Christ is the spiritual temple from which the source of living water springs forth: incorporated into Christ by the Holy Spirit, "we are the temple of the living God."[14]

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[12] "Fatwa issued against Kenya for constructing Kaaba replica," *Hindustantimes.com*, August 19, 2016, accessed July 20, 2020.
[13] "Part Two, Section I, Chapter Two, Article 1, IV. Where is the Liturgy Celebrated?" In *Cathechism of the Catholic Church,* Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1993, V*atican.va*, n.d., accessed July 20, 2020.
[14] Ibid.

When it comes to church design, the Catechism stresses that such a building should express its function in a worthy manner:

> These visible churches are not simply gathering places but signify and make visible the Church living in this place, the dwelling of God with men reconciled and united in Christ. (…) This house ought to be *in good taste* and be a *worthy place* for prayer and sacred ceremonial. In this "house of God" the truth and the harmony of the signs that make it up should show Christ to be present and active in this place[15] (italics added).

The constitution "Sacrosanctum Concilium" of the Second Vatican Council (1963) repeats this focus on the importance of the community on the one hand, and an appropriate design of the place of worship on the other. It states that "when churches are to be built, let great care be taken that these be suitable for the celebration of liturgical services and for the active participation of the faithful".[16] In addition to these guidelines, the Catechism also declares that several elements have to be present inside a church, such as an altar, a tabernacle and a baptistery.[17] These are all the instructions on architecture given by the authorities of the Church. Further, more *precise,* notes on the desired look of a church are lacking.

As there are few instructions on the desired *look* of churches, it is now useful to look at the Church's guidelines for Catholic art. After all, architecture is an art form as well. According to the decree issued after the twenty-fifth session of the Council of Trent (1563), sacred art is essential to help the believer concentrate on sacred figures as well as for the education of the faithful. With regard to the focus on holy figures, the decree "On the Invocation, Veneration, And Relics, of Saints, and on Sacred Images" states the following:

> The honour which is shown them is referred to the prototypes which those images represent; in such wise that by the images which we kiss, and before which we uncover the head, and prostrate ourselves, we adore Christ; and we venerate the saints, whose similitude they bear (Waterworth 1848, 235).

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[15] "Part Two, Section I, Chapter Two, Article 1, IV. Where is the Liturgy Celebrated?" In *Cathechism of the Catholic Church,* Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1993, *Vatican.va*, n.d., accessed July 20, 2020.

[16] "Pope Paul IV. Constiution on the Sacred Literugy. Sacrosanctum Concilium," In *Documents of the Second Vatican* Council, December 4, 1963, *Vatican.va*, n.d., accessed July 20, 2020.

[17] "Part Two, Section I, Chapter Two, Article 1, IV. Where is the Liturgy Celebrated?" In *Cathechism of the Catholic Church,* Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1993, *Vatican.va*, n.d., accessed July 20, 2020.

This signifies that the Church approves of acts of replication and imitation, for this fragment encourages the Catholic community as a whole to construe objects and images resembling saints. This practice necessarily involves the imitation of previous images. When it comes to the educational function of sacred images, the decree even states the desire for imitation explicitly:

> As also that great profit is derived from all sacred images, not only because the people are thereby admonished of the benefits and gifts bestowed upon them by Christ, but also because the miracles which God has performed by means of the saints, and their salutary examples, are set before the eyes of the faithful; that so they may give God thanks for those things; may order their own lives and manners in *imitation* of the saints; and may be excited to adore and love God, and to cultivate piety (Waterworth 1848, 235; italics added).

On the whole, with both excerpts in mind, the reasoning is as follows: Through imitated objects and images believers can learn about the lives of saints and subsequently focus their attention on these figures. Once the believer has improved his or her knowledge via imitation, he or she will be able to imitate the behaviour of these saints in daily life. This will make the believer a better Catholic in general.

The ideas expressed in the decrees following the Council of Trent were, centuries later, repeated in the constitution "Sacrosanctum Concilium". Obviously, the instructions issued during the Second Vatican Council did not apply to the construction of the Basilica of the Holy Agatha and Barbara, which began in 1865. Nevertheless, the "Sacrosanctum Concilium" document illustrates the continuity of the Church's ideas and it shows why the Church's authorities still approve of the use of imitated sacred objects and styles. The constitution stressed again that:

> All artists who, prompted by their talents, desire to serve God's glory in holy Church, should ever bear in mind that they are engaged in a kind of sacred imitation of God the Creator, and are concerned with works destined to be used in Catholic worship, to edify the faithful, and to foster their piety and their religious formation.[18]

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[18] "Pope Paul IV. Constiution on the Sacred Literugy. Sacrosanctum Concilium," In *Documents of the Second Vatican* Council, December 4, 1963, *Vatican.va*, n.d., accessed July 20, 2020.

Furthermore, the text also explains that sacred art "should be truly worthy, becoming, and beautiful",[19] thus echoing what the Catechism says about church architecture. Other interesting notes are that the Church has not adopted one singular style as its own – thus giving artists freedom to define for themselves what is worthy – and also by stating that the amount of artworks inside a church should be "moderate" and ordered.[20] However, what this precisely entails remains undefined. This last note is particularly interesting to the St. Peter imitations, because these designs struggle with modesty as they reproduce a church that shouts of the wealth, the power and the universality of the Vatican.

To summarize my analysis so far, according to these documents church architecture must allow communal worship, must show its function as a house of God and be worthy of that purpose. Imitation is an accepted practice to help educate the lay and enforce piety. These instructions are rather general and, therefore, church architecture has always been changing depending on what society has to offer at a certain point in time. For example, Gothic church architecture emerged as a result of increased safety,[21] wealth and new engineering techniques during the eleventh and twelfth century, thus enabling architects to use more windows and to build higher churches (Halgren Kilde 2008, 65-66). This twofold process allowed the clergy to dream about grander church designs, in order to demonstrate God's divine power by means of richly decorated churches with slender forms and open spaces. To further illustrate the impact of the societal context on religious architecture, one can contrast the Gothicism of the twelfth century with the modernism of the twentieth century, which are each other's opposite architecturally. Modernist Catholic architecture emerged as an attempt to promote the ongoing relevance of the Church in combination with modern building techniques (ibid., 171; Roth and Roth Clark 2015, 557). One of the ways in which the Church sought renewal was a new emphasis on the individual believer in order to promote larger lay participation. The simple aesthetics of modernism were a great means to this end, because it stimulated believers to fill the space with meaning by themselves (Halgren Kilde 2008, 182). Simultaneously, the modern style also highlights the modern character of the church. Gothicism and modernism are thus two entirely different types of architecture, yet within the right context these were considered to be appropriate and expressive of God's presence in the building. It can be

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[19] "Pope Paul IV. Constiution on the Sacred Literugy. Sacrosanctum Concilium," In *Documents of the Second Vatican* Council, December 4, 1963, *Vatican.va*, n.d., accessed July 20, 2020.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Before the eleventh century churches and monasteries often fell victim to raids due to poverty, hunger and roving bands. For this reason, the religious buildings from before the eleventh century resemble fortresses with massive walls and small windows; the Romanesque style (Halgren Kilde 2008, 62).

therefore be concluded that views on what is worthy are continuously changing. The imitations of the St. Peter's are subject to this dynamic too.

When considering how the Church authorities reacted to the specific cases in this study, it is hard to draw conclusions. With regard to the Holy Agatha and Barbara Basilica and the Mary, Queen of the World Cathedral, I could not retrieve any written or spoken endorsements made by papal authorities, which forced me to rely on records of actions taken by the authorities, such as donations made to these churches. Moreover, without written explanations accompanying these deeds, it is impossible to ascertain whether religious motives inspired these or not. Maybe such actions simply resulted from personal affections. Nevertheless, it is useful to disclose these, as these do reveal the ties between the Vatican and the imitations. Concerning the Holy Agatha and Barbara, there are three acts known that indicate a connection with the Vatican. On March 12 1868 pope Pius IX gave his blessing for the construction of the new church (Bedaf, Den Braber and Dekkers 2005, 37) and in 1912 pope Pius X granted the Basilica the title "Basilica minor", which applied to only one other church in the Netherlands at the time[22] (ibid., 25). Furthermore, in 1955 pope Pius XII donated a substantial amount of money for the restoration of the church.[23] These are all actions the papacy does not take for just any other church, only for exceptional cases, thereby showing that several popes at least *cared* about the Basilica. Moreover, keeping in mind the Church's favourable attitude towards imitation, these acts are a sign of positive feelings towards the Basilica. I recognize a similar dynamic in the papal dealings with the Mary, Queen of the World Cathedral. In 1919 pope Benedict XV granted the church the title "Basilica minor" – just like the one in Oudenbosch -, which was rare at the time. Only two other Canadian churches received the same status.

Whereas the attitude of the Vatican towards the Holy Agatha and Barbara and the Mary, Queen of the World appears to be positive, the Church's authorities appeared to be less happy with the Our Lady of Peace Basilica. Again, there are no records of the papacy directly addressing the imitated character of the church, but there are reports of friction between the Vatican and president Houphouët-Boigny concerning the construction of the Basilica. Journalists reported that pope John Paul II requested whether the dome of Basilica could be built in a less expansive way than the dome of the St. Peter's.[24] This request was honoured, nevertheless the giant cross on top of the dome still makes the building taller than its

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[22] This other Basilica minor is the Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in Sittard.
[23] "Paus gaf bijdrage voor basiliek Oudenbosch", *De Volkskrant* May 21, 1955.
[24] "Photos: The World's Largest Church Is in the Middle of an African Coconut Plantation," *Motherjones.com*, July 25, 2014, accessed July 20, 2020.

counterpart in Rome.[25] Moreover, pope John Paul only agreed to consecrate the Basilica after the Ivorian government promised to build a hospital for the poor adjacent to the church.[26] In all, these issues set conditions on which the design of the church would have to be construed "in good taste" and "worthy" in order to be accepted in the aesthetic formation of Roman Catholicism. However, these signs of discord contrast with the Vatican's official dealings with the Basilica once it was finished, as the church immediately got the status "Basilica minor" and as the pope called the Basilica "beautiful" in a speech during his visit to Africa in 1990 (which included the consecration of the church).[27] Nonetheless, the rest of his speech can also be interpreted as implicit criticism. In his address the pope put a great emphasis on the role of the believers themselves as being the constituents of God's house.[28] This is a reiteration of the Catechism as explained earlier, but it can also be interpreted as if the pope does not care how a church looks, as long as a community of believers is present. Precisely that can be regarded as criticism indirectly aimed at Houphouët-Boigny. The Basilica accommodates some18.000 people, but *The Guardian* reported in 2015 that usually only a few hundred believers attend mass,[29] and therefore the church is mostly empty. These instances show that the dealings of the Vatican with Ivory Coast were much more ambiguous compared to the cases in Canada and in the Netherlands.

3.2 The Influence of Imitation on the Religious Experience: Enforced Focus on The St. Peter's

Now that it has been established that imitation is an authorized part of the aesthetic formation of Roman Catholicism, I will delve deeper into the question what the imitated elements of the Holy Agatha and Barbara mean for religious experience. However, I would first like to clarify that my findings do not apply to all repeated practices in the Catholic tradition as these practices come in many forms: The celebration of the Eucharist, crucifixes, images of Holy figures, pilgrimages, prayers, baptisms and so on. I therefore will make a distinction between reproductions where the exact same ritual can be repeated and imitations where this is not the case, often because such rituals are strongly connected to an individual event and a certain place. Ritual is crucial to religious materiality, because it has the power to

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25   Ibid.
26   "The Largest Church in the World Has The Fewest Worshippers," *Thedailybeast.com*, January 30, 2014, accessed July 20, 2020.
27   "Dédicace de la Basilique de "Notre-Dame de la Paix" Homélie du Pape Jean-Paul II. Yamoussoukro (Côte-d'Ivoire) Lundi, 10 septembre 1990," *Vatican.va*, n.d., accessed July 20, 2020.
28   Ibid.
29   "Yamoussoukro's Notre-Dame de la Paix, the world's largest Basilica - a history of cities in 50 buildings, day 37," *Theguardian.com*, May 15, 2015, accessed July 20, 2020.

raise sacred value and meaning. Above all, a religious object is never sacred without the help of humans. To illustrate this with a Durkheimian example, a stone may be touched by God, but without ritual this has no meaning. The stone will just exist in silence. However, once the holiness of the stone is acknowledged by the authorities and these authorities instruct believers to perform rituals around it, the stone will become religiously meaningful. With this understanding of the production of sacred value I thus make a distinction between reproducible and non-reproducible rituals. For instance, the ritual of the Eucharist always follows the same model and therefore has, in theory, the same sacred value every time and in every place. However, when looking at Oudenbosch – far removed from Rome – it is not the pope who holds mass inside the Holy Agatha and Barbara Basilica. Hence, the ritual connected to the building is not identical to the one in Rome. My analysis concerns this last category, a situation where a ritual cannot be replaced entirely, but where there is some kind of connection to the original object, its place and its rituals. Based on a sermon by Hellemons, where he explicates his reasons for St. Peter imitation, I argue that the imitated character of the Holy Agatha and Barbara has four prospective closely connected, intertwining, effects on the religious experience of the believer: The imitated elements serve as a reminder of the original, they provide what I call an auxiliary sensational form, they enhance the symbolic capital of the church and they are an expression of devotion to the St. Peter's itself. I would like to stress that, based on Hellemons's statements, these are the potential effects on the believer; his words prove that these effects are present, but they do not show to what extent the average Catholic visitor has the same experience as pastor Hellemons.

The reminding effect of similarities is the most basic effect of imitation, as is acknowledged in many studies on religious replication and imitation (see Agnew 2015; Bielo 2016; Bowman 2019; Datta 2019; Peña 2011). To name a few concrete examples, in Michael Agnew's study on Lourdes veneration (2015), he describes that some pilgrims replicate the grotto, or bring some commemorative material back home, to keep the experience of the place present in their daily lives: "Some element of the experience, some reminder, some touchstone had to be brought back home with them to England" (ibid., 529). Another example, from another religion, is provided by Ankur Datta. He researched a replica of the Kheer Bhavani Shrine made by Kashmiri Pandits, a Hindu minority in India which has been displaced from their home lands since the conflict in Jammu and Kashmir began in 1990 (2019, 276). To keep their religious life going, the Pandits reproduced the shrine in a different place, as to continue with their worship of the goddess Kheer Bhavani. Datta concludes that memorialisation is a key aspect of the replica's function, because the site enables tradition to

be preserved, keeps memories alive and allows the transmission of knowledge about the shrine to younger generations (ibid., 281). Similarities can be found in the case of the construction of the Holy Agatha and Barbara, as Hellemons wanted a "religious memory" of his priest training in Rome:

> And still because of the high costs we can never endeavour to follow Rome in the slightest, yet it pleases my Roman soul to be able to sit in a Roman shadow. This will give a steady memory of the capital of Christendom where the religion seats in its centre and where the head of the Church is enthroned. This provides a religious memory of the blissful days I spent in the sanctuaries of the Holy city, which I at the time observed with scrutiny, to maybe someday replace something of it to my homeland (Quoted in Van Casteren 1970, 60; transl. L.V.).

For this reason I argue that the Holy Agatha and Barbara is a religious memory object, just like the cases of the Lourdes pilgrimage and the Kheer Bhavani Shrine. On a side note I would like to remark that this dynamic works best when an especially iconic object, or place, is imitated, because then connections with the original are the most easily made (Alexander and Bartmański 2012). This would explain why the Basilica in Oudenbosch is so easily interpreted as a "copy" of the St. Peter's in various publications about the church (see also chapter 4); the dome, the *Baldacchino* and the high altar are quick reminders of the original.

The next effect I want to discuss concerns the production of the feeling of awe in religious imitations. It can be ascertained that imitated religious matter evokes such a wow-effect, yet it is doubtful whether such material elicits *the same* feeling of awe as induced by the original object or event. Some scholars argue that imitations are able to invoke the original's wow-effect very well while others find that this is impossible. To bring these two threads of thought together I herewith introduce the concept of the *auxiliary* sensational forms. However, I will first sketch the present perspectives on the matter in order to demonstrate the use of this concept.

With regard to the idea that imitated sensational forms can produce a wow-effect identical to the feeling of awe the original induces, roughly two theories can be identified: Reproduction via personal, religious associations (see Agnew 2015; Huerta 2017; McDannel 1995; Morgan 2017; Napolitano 2017 and Woets 2016) and via the so called collapse of time (see Bielo 2017 and Bowman & Sepp 2019). Colleen McDannel's research on Lourdes grotto replicas in *Material Christianity* (1995) offers a representation of the first theory, because she argues that "the real is achieved *not* by appealing to a natural experience but rather to an

experience associated with the sacred" (ibid., 161). Once the believer stands before a replica of the grotto, he or she will enter into a certain story that makes the person's engagement with the material object "real", meaning that when a substitute gets treated as being genuine, it will become the real thing (ibid.). To name a few other examples, a similar process can be found in Diego Alonso Huerta's research on the replaced crucifix of the Lord of Huamantanga (2017), or in Woets's analysis of images of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Ghana (2016). James Bielo articulates the theory of the collapse of time. In his study on Mormon Trek re-enactment he found that participants created an affective bond with their religious ancestors via an imitated experience (2017, 141). The re-enactment enables participants to face the same hardships as their ancestors did, thus causing time to "collapse" and allowing partakers to experience the wow-effect of the original Trek (ibid., 142). Still, in contrast to the findings of McDannel and Bielo, there are scholars whose studies indicate that the wow-effect of the original *cannot* be recreated or replicated. In his ethnographic study on the Kheer Bhavani, Datta shows that an imitation fails in achieving the same status as the original place of worship, because the authenticity of the original site cannot be imitated (2019, 284).

Although I largely agree with McDannel and Bielo that imitation and replication provide a movement towards the original experience, I find their theories that this will lead to an encounter with the wow-effect of the original to be unconvincing, mainly for two reasons. First, the imitation will lack the aura of the original. Aura is a term coined by Walter Benjamin who famously used it to criticize mechanically imitated artworks. However, he claimed that "aura appears in all things", thus also – potentially – including religious materials (quoted in Hansen 2008, 336). He described aura as an atmosphere of distance, which is created by the uniqueness of the artwork in a certain time and place (Benjamin 2005, 222-223). In other words, artworks or religious objects each have a unique history and precisely that is is impossible to reproduce (ibid.). Nevertheless, this idea may be nuanced somewhat, as research by Woets has shown that even cheap imitated depictions of Jesus do possess a "magical aura", as these evoke feelings of connectedness with the divine (2016, 295). Still, my concern is whether imitations elicit *the same wow-effects* as the original events or objects do, which requires imitations to have the same aura. This is where Benjamin's theory becomes useful, because I argue that aura cannot be imitated. In contrast with her own arguments Woets provides some proof of this too. In her analysis she discussed the dreamed encounters of her respondents with Jesus and, as it turns out, in most narratives material pictures of Jesus become insignificant when compared to their experience of Jesus in their dreams (ibid., 296). This idea also appears in Datta's research, as some of his respondents

argue that the imitation does not work, because the "*natural*" cannot be reproduced and neither can the experience of it (2019, 285). With this in mind, a contrast between the St. Peter's aura and the aura of the Holy Agatha and Barbara emerges. The St. Peter's creates a sense of distance by the fact that its history goes all the way back to emperor Constantine, or by the belief that the building's design is the result of divine inspiration. The Holy Agatha and Barbara will never be able to imitate this exceptional history, therefore its aura will definitely be different compared to the original. At most, the building elicits a memory of the aura of the St. Peter's.

My second reason for criticism concerns the idea of matter out of place as invented by Mary Douglas. She argues that matter is classified in a system of categories that determine whether something is hygienic or dirty, appropriate or inappropriate: "Shoes are not dirty in themselves, but it is dirty to place them on the dining-table; food is not dirty in itself, but it is dirty to leave cooking utensils in the bedroom" (2013, 36-37). In other words, pollution is that what contradicts the system of classifications (ibid.). This can be applied to anything, including the imitation of religious buildings (O'Meara 2018). With respect to the imitations of the St. Peter's, none of these appear to be in a fitting environment when compared to the surroundings of the original: A small, Dutch village (Oudenbosch), a dessert (Yamoussoukro) or encircled by skyscrapers (Montreal); environments that simply do not compare to Rome. I argue that these inappropriate backgrounds have a distracting effect, much like the dirt in Douglas's example, because these do not conform to the original experience in Rome and therefore not to Douglas's system of classifications. As a result, the experience of the imitations inevitably differs from the experience of the original in Rome, thereby making it impossible to encounter an *identical* wow-effect.

Imitation   *Original medium*   *The "beyond"*

Figure 28: Schematic overview of an auxiliary sensational form

Medium   *The "beyond"*
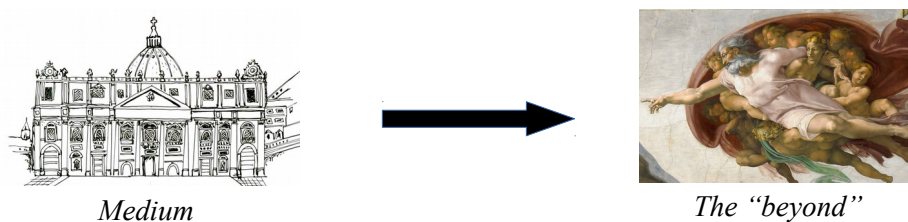
Figure 29: Sensational form in its default mode.

On the one hand it is unconvincing that imitated sensational forms elicit the same wow as the original, but on the other hand, it is also too severe to say that wow-effects evoked by imitations have nothing to do with the original. My concept of auxiliary sensational forms provides a solution which sits between these contrasting views. To recall Meyer's definition of a sensational form, she describes this as "an authorized procedure to experience, in a structured manner, a movement towards a limit that evokes a sense of there being something more, a 'beyond'" (2015, 20). However, I call the sensational form provided by imitations auxiliary, because these present first a movement towards the original material before providing a movement towards the world of saints and God. In other words, it is a wow-effect that helps to invoke some feelings of the original object or place in order to get closer to the "beyond"; the world of God. After all, material itself is not the focus of worship like McDannel says, but it is the connection that the material has with the "beyond" that is venerated. Thus Meyer's notion of sensational forms is the default mode while auxiliary sensational forms are a variation that provides a movement to God and saints through a reference to the original (see figure 28 and 29). This dynamic is clearly present in Oudenbosch, especially as Hellemons wanted a church where he could experience a piece of Rome and its special relation with God (Van Casteren 1970, 60).

The enhancement of symbolic capital brings the aforementioned effects together. The symbolism of an imitation gets elevated because the reproduced elements reminds one of the original and because they present an auxiliary sensational form. This is further boosted by the so called contagiousness of the sacred. This is an idea put forward by Durkheim, who described that the sacred is able "to flow into the profane world, whenever the latter comes near it" (1995, 322). This transmission of the sacred appears by both direct and indirect contact (ibid.).[30] In the case of St. Peter imitation I argue that these churches come 'near' the original, because they look similar thus their designs come "close" to the St. Peter's. Bearing this in mind it is striking to read Hellemons's sermon about the construction of the Holy Agatha and Barbara, where he advocates that churches that look like their Roman examples stand closer to the sacred:

> Surely I cherish Rome and Rome's churches and Rome's church ceremonies, of which my soul
> is permeated and pervaded and I do not hide that I wish to imprint the same spirit on you and on
> the contrary, what deviates from Rome, to that I am cold and even more than indifferent and my

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[30]   See also Peña (2011) on the imitation of the Virgin of Guadalupe.

inner feelings say that he who builds after the example of the Roman church, draws from the *true source* (quoted in Van Casteren 1970, 60; translation L.V.; italics added).

He thus calls the churches of Rome the *true source*, firstly because Rome is the capital of Roman Catholicism and secondly because he believed that these churches were the result of divine inspiration:

> The churches of Rome that have been newly built and established under the supervision of the pope, I have always regarded as designs descended from Heaven and inspired into the Vicar of Christ by the Holy Spirit' (ibid.; translation L.V.).

What Hellemons tries to say here is that a church, which is imitated after the St. Peter's, will have more sacred capital and he thus acknowledges the contagiousness of the St. Peter's sacred value. He consequently exploits this for his own church.

The contagiousness of the sacred has one other consequence pertaining to this analysis: The St. Peter's itself becomes a focal point of devotion. The Basilica does not only provide a movement towards the "beyond", it is also the "beyond" *itself*. As Hellemons's quotes show, he believed that the design of the St. Peter's was literally granted from God's hands, and therefore the Basilica stands in a direct connection to the Holy. The wow-effect induced by the Holy Agatha and Barbara is thus not merely auxiliary, it presents a sensational form in its default mode as well.

The effects of imitation, as set out above, do also apply to the Montreal and Yamoussoukro case studies. Still, as these churches were much more part of a political campaign, these mostly express how the symbolic capital of the St. Peter's is exploited to increase the sacred value – and therefore importance – of the buildings. In Montreal Bourget wanted a strong symbol of Roman Catholicism to prove the might and universality of Catholicism in his home town (Gowans 1955,11). The Our Lady of Peace was part of the president's project of self-promotion, for which he lent the symbolism of the St. Peter's to give his own church a more religious meaning and significance. These buildings thus consciously direct the attention to the St. Peter's and profit from the religious associations this building evokes.

When considering how the Holy Agatha and Barbara affects the experience of the St. Peter's it is unlikely that these effects appear as well. First of all, the amount of visitors who go to both churches is incredibly small, thereby preventing such a connection to begin with.

Secondly, neither variations of sensational forms appear from this perspective, because on the one hand the St. Peter's is – in all aspects – beyond the Holy Agatha and Barbara, thus preventing the existence of a sensational form in its default mode. On the other hand, an auxiliary sensational form is neither present because the St. Peter's does not reference to its Oudenbosch's imitation, simply because the original was built centuries earlier. Thirdly, the Holy Agatha and Barbara does not stand in a similar connection to God like the St. Peter's design does, hence the imitation has no contagious sacredness that adds to the religious experience of the original. Finally, the resemblances between the two churches do evoke memories of the imitation when encountering the St. Peter's, however, as stated above, the number of people who happen to experience this is very small. Generally, the St. Peter's has a big influence on the religious experience of the Holy Agatha and Barbara, but not vice versa.

3.3 Chapter Conclusion: The St. Peter's as the Focal Point of Attention

On the whole, it can be concluded that the imitations of the St. Peter's strengthen the focus on the Basilica in Rome as being the central medium in the aesthetic formation of Roman Catholicism. Although the imitations appear far away from Rome, they elicit effects on the religious experience that brings the believer closer to the original. They do so as a reminder of the St. Peter's, as an auxiliary sensational form, by exploiting the original's symbolic capital and as a manifestation of devotion to the St. Peter's itself. Nevertheless, except for the reminding effect of similarities, the same effects do not appear when considering how the Holy Agatha and Barbara affects the experience of the St. Peter's. All this is generally approved of by the Vatican. As long as it is tastefully applied, the authorities officially view imitation as an opportunity for both education and for the promotion of piety. Still, explicit endorsements of these imitated church buildings by the Vatican are lacking.

4. The Limits of Imitation: Meyer's Notion of the Sacred Applied to Riegl's Monumental Values

Introduction

In this chapter I analyse from an *art-historical* perspective how the experience of the Holy Agatha and Barbara is influenced by, or influences, the St. Peter's. In the previous chapter I showed that four dynamics enforce the spiritual focus on the St. Peter's: Imitation as a reminding force, as an auxiliary sensation form, as the enhancement of sacred capital and as devotion to the St. Peter's itself. Do these effects also apply to an art-historical review of the imitations? Do they evoke a focus on the St. Peter's too? To answer these questions, I will analyse the art-historical features of the Holy Agatha and Barbara based on the monumental values as coined by the nineteenth century art-historian Alois Riegl. As I will show, these values embody two things: They emphasize the unique character of the Basilica whilst simultaneously indicating that an aesthetic account of the Basilica cannot escape references to the St. Peter's. Subsequently I analyse how these allusions to the original add or diminish the imitation's monumental values. Here I go back to my findings from chapter 3 and apply Meyer's notion of the sacred to art. In the last part of this section I will consider how imitation affects the experience of the St. Peter's. There I will connect Benjamin's famous conclusion, that imitations diminish the original's aura, to Meyer's notion of sensational form. The resulting paradox suggests that imitations either preserve and enhance the aura of the St. Peter's, or decrease it. Before I start this whole analysis, I will first explain and justify my use of Riegl's monumental values.

4.1 Explanation and Justification: Why Riegl's Monumental Values?

As I were to analyse the art-historical relation between the St. Peter's and the Holy Agatha and Barbara, I first needed a framework that describes what features of these buildings are art-historically relevant and why. Such a conceptional structure enables me to compare the original and imitated artworks and helps me determine whether, and how, these connect to each other. I chose to base my analysis on *values* because on the one hand these provide a framework by which artistic experience can be defined, and on the other hand these also offer categories that can be compared fairly easily. However, as this chapter focuses on the *artistic* experience, it seems appropriate to use valuations particularly concerned with artworks. Such

systems are in fact inadequate however, as these do not include the practical use of an art piece. These systems often review the extent to which an artwork is aesthetically pleasing, whether it holds cognitive meaning, or whether it is emotionally affective (Fenner 2008), which all apply to architecture, but neglect to consider if the object is practically useful. This is a major flaw, because buildings are essentially spaces meant for a certain utilization. For this reason, it is more suitable to use a valuation system from the sphere of heritage conservation, as such systems do acknowledge the functional purposes of architecture. Moreover, such values also easily connect to the following chapter on heritage. The heritage conservation field has many systems of valuation, all of which can be traced back to the first attempt to categorize monumental values: Alois Riegl's "The Modern Cult of the Monument: Its Character and Its Origin" from 1903.

Riegl's system contains two main categories, namely memory values and present-day values. The former is concerned with the satisfaction of psychological and intellectual needs, while the latter refers to aesthetic and practical demands. These two categories are separated into further subdivisions. The class of memory values consists of age value, historical value and deliberate commemorative value (see figure 30). Age value pertains to a monument's *outmoded appearance*; a building with great age value, for example, lacks completeness or has a dissolved shape and colour (Riegl 1996, 73). Historical value is based on the *specific stage a monument represents in the development of human creation* and increases with the monument's uniqueness and incorruptedness (ibid., 75). Lastly, deliberate commemorative value concerns monuments that were created to *memorialise* certain events or deeds (ibid., 77). The example of a ruined Greek temple illustrates how these values work: Such a building has lost its original colour and misses many parts, indicating a high age value, however, the temple may still show aspects of the stonemason's craft thus revealing its historical value. Moreover, as the temple was built to honour and memorialise a certain god, the structure has a high deliberate commemorative value.

The present-day values are divided into use value, and art value. Subsequently, art value is split up into newness value and relative art value (see figure 30). Use value refers to a monument's physical functionality, meaning whether a building can actually be used for its intended purpose. For example, the ruined temple has little use value, whereas a restored church has great use value. Newness value relates to a monument's state of completeness, as opposed to age value, because this emphasizes the wholesomeness of colour and shape (ibid., 80). Therefore relatively recent monuments usually have great newness value, still older monuments that are being kept in good condition also have this value. Last, but not least, art

value involves a purely aesthetic appreciation of a monument (ibid., 71). According to Riegl, such appreciation is relative to each period, as each era is defined by a particular aesthetic taste commensurate to the time (ibid.). Moreover, this value is intrinsically connected to historical value, as every monument of art is also a monument of history and vice versa. The aforementioned example of the Greek temple thus also reveals art value, because it shows Greek aesthetics.

Memory Values			Present-day Values		
Age value	Historical value	Deliberate commemorative value	Use value	Art value	
				Newness value	Relative art value

Figure 30: Overview of Riegl's monumental values.

I have several reasons for choosing Riegl's thought. Firstly, even though he developed his ideas more than a hundred years ago, they are still relevant to this very day (see Arrhenius 2003; Barassi 2007; Zerner 1976). All the charters issued by the *International Council on Monuments and Sites* (ICOMOS) incorporate systems of valuation that followed from Riegl's *Modern Cult of Monuments*. New categories of value may have emerged throughout the years, but I argue that these mostly provide further elaborations of the already existing Rieglian classes. This brings me to my second point. Riegl's system is inclusive and relatively simple. For example, the Burra Charter, issued by ICOMOS Australia, distinguishes between historic and scientific value. The former refers to the way a monument is historically relevant to "aesthetics, art and architecture, science, spirituality and society", the latter refers to "the information content of a place and its ability to reveal more about an aspect of the past through examination or investigation".[31] This distinction would not be necessary in Riegl's system, as he regards the scientific value of a monument to be implicit in historical value (Riegl 1996, 70). With this I want to illustrate that Riegl's categories encompass most of the values that have emerged over the years within a straightforward system. Finally, I find Riegl's thoughts particularly interesting for my analysis, because he briefly mentions the possibilities and limits of imitation in his valuation system. For instance, he views replication as a solution to the decay of historical value. A replica can preserve the original look of a monument in decay, whilst the deteriorating monument itself maintains its documentary

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[31] "The Burra Charter. The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 2013," Burwood: *Australia ICOMOS Incorporated. International Council on Monuments and Sites*, November 2013, p. 3.

integrity (Barassi 2007, n.p.). Riegl only mentions imitation and replication in passing, whilst its potential could be analysed in great detail. Therefore my study is an attempt at conducting such an analysis, an analysis where I assess the possibilities and restrictions of imitation in each value category.

As Riegl's system is over a hundred years old, it is outdated in some aspects. His thoughts do not include intangible heritage and he is often criticized for approaching monuments as being frozen in a single moment in time (Barassi 2007, n.p.; Rogers 2018, 21) However, the first point of critique mentioned has no consequences for this study, simply because the focus lies on tangible heritage. As far as the second point of criticism is concerned I can respond that the philosophies underlying Riegl's valuation system do not influence how we can use his values today. For example, Riegl believed that every period in history has its own art style (Barassi 2007, n.p.), which in today's age of postmodernism is obsolete as the styles of the past now reappear in contemporary designs. But does this change in thinking actually affect the usability of Riegl's values? No, we can still attribute historical value to any monument that represents a certain development in human creation. As a whole, I argue that Riegl's monumental values are still relevant with regard to an art-historical analysis of the Holy Agatha and Barbara and the St. Peter's.

4.2 The Impossibility of reproducing Monumental Values: More Emphasis on the Imitation's Uniqueness?

In the previous chapter I argued that the imitated elements reinforce the concentration on the St. Peter's as the central medium in the aesthetic formation of Roman Catholicism. When considering this issue from an art-historical perspective, this focus tends to become ambiguous. Most of Riegl's values cannot be imitated, thus emphasizing the Holy Agatha and Barbara Basilica as a monument in its own right. This is especially evident with regard to its historical value, which can be demonstrated by contrasting the two churches. Starting with the St. Peter's, this church bears the markings of multiple artistic styles, most notably the Renaissance and the Baroque. Moreover, the church's construction shows key moments in the progress of human engineering. The construction of the dome, for example, was regarded as a miracle of structural engineering at the time (Lees-Milne 1967, 215), especially because the domes of the Pantheon, the Hagia Sofia, the Duomo of Florence and the Selimiye Mosque were the only large domes in existence then. In addition, the St. Peter's is quite a unique example of Counter-Reformation architecture, because there are no other churches from the same period that can match its size.

Let me now contrast this with the historical value of the Holy Agatha and Barbara. This building was constructed in an entirely different historical period, a time when church architecture was defined by architectural revivalism (Roth and Roth Clark 2015, 505) and by ultramontanism. The Basilica is an example of this revivalism, as it echoes the styles of the Renaissance and the Baroque. Moreover, the references to these styles may deceive the untrained eye, as one might mistake this church for a seventeenth century building. I therefore argue that the Basilica possesses, what I call, *misleading* historical value. Furthermore, the Holy Agatha and Barbara marks a particular moment of progress in technical engineering too, as the dome was constructed using an unprecedented minimum of material (Van Casteren 1970, 64). This juxtaposition illustrates how differently churches are appreciated from an art-historical perspective. Even though the Holy Agatha and Barbara resembles the St. Peter's, its historical value has little to do with the Roman original. I detect similar contrasts in the newness and age value of both churches, because each church has its own age and history, resulting in their own particular age and newness value. Still, it can be argued that these values are connected to each other, as their development has followed similar patterns. For example, both buildings have a low age value as constant maintenance prevents decay. Nonetheless, I find this argument to be meaningless, because this way either church can be compared to an almost infinite amount of other monuments that are being kept in good condition.

With respect to art and use value, however, the focus on the St. Peter's reappears. In their art value, both churches have their unique features: The St. Peter's with its overkill of papal monuments and St. Peter's Square, the Holy Agatha and Barbara with its terrazzo floor and its monument for local histories (see chapter 1 and 2). Still, the Basilica's imitations of the *Cattedra Petri,* the *Baldacchino*, its dome and the marble decorations create a clear link with the St. Peter's, thereby connecting the art value of these two churches. This connection lies in the given that such imitations can only be defined in relation to their originals, because wherever one tries to obtain information about the art of the Basilica, the building is presented as a "copy" of the St. Peter's. For example, the exhibition *Het Grootste Museum van Nederland* of *Museum Catharijneconvent* – in which the Oudenbosch Basilica participates - has this text on its website: "Believe it or not, this is a nineteenth century building. However, the architecture and the richly decorated interior makes you think that you've entered the sixteenth century St. Peter's Basilica in Rome"[32] (translation L.V.). A similar description of

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[32] "Basiliek van de Heiligen Agatha en Barbara, Oudenbosch," *Grootstemuseum.nl*, n.d., accessed July 20, 2020.

the Basilica can be found in the book *Kerkinterieurs in Nederland* (Church Interiors in the Netherlands) where the interiors of "iconic" Dutch churches are displayed and discussed:

> To enter this simplified copy of the St. Peter's is, because of its smaller scale, a strange experience for all who know the original; it is Rome, yet it is not. The main setup is the same: a nave with three side aisles, which are separated from each other by heavy piers, three bays long. (…) Adjoining is a centralized plan, also a simplified version of the original: a square bloc with an ambulatory and on three sides a protruding, semi-circular apse. The central square is dominated by the great dome, which is lighted by windows in the drum and from above by the lantern – just like in the St. Peter's (Von Der Dunk 2016, 250-253; translation L.V.).

Both descriptions do not only show that the art of the Holy Agatha and Barbara is defined in relation to the St. Peter's, they also illustrate that the Basilica is fascinating precisely *because* of this relation. Interestingly, this was not always the case. As explained in chapter 2, the church was in a state of decay during the 1950's and restoration was badly needed then, otherwise the Basilica had to be demolished. In making the decision whether a restoration of this church was possible at all, and whether public funds could be used for such a project, an advisory committee came up with a report in which the Basilica's art-historic value was determined. The need for such a review became clear during a municipal meeting. There the attendees concluded that the Basilica was "a bad imitation of the St. Peter's and that it was in no way an artwork or a church building having artistic value"[33] (translation L.V.). This stresses again how the art value of the Basilica gets determined in relation to the St. Peter's. Eventually a committee was appointed which eventually concluded that the Basilica "is more than a copy of the St. Peter's in Rome and does in fact have its *own* architectural and aesthetic values"[34] (translation L.V., italics added). In the end they decided to restore the church, as described in chapter 2. In summary, both churches may have their unique artworks, but the art value of the Holy Agatha and Barbara also stands in connection to the St. Peter's.

  This dynamic, with respect to art value, brings me to the issue of use value. Again, both churches each have their own use value as a place where people gather to perform religious rituals or where they can appreciate extraordinary architecture and art. However, the Holy Agatha and Barbara has also on this point a special relation with the St. Peter's, because of what I call *symbolic* use value. According to Barassi imitated art and architecture always emphasize use value, because these "provide a "usable" equivalent of an unusable original"

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[33] *De Volkskrant* March 12, 1954, p. 3.
[34] *Het Parool* January 29, 1955, p. 4.

(2007, n.p.). Following this line of thinking, the original of the St. Peter's is "unusable" because Rome is far removed from Oudenbosch and therefore the Roman Basilica cannot be visited on a daily basis. Instead, the Holy Agatha and Barbara provides a good substitute for anyone who wishes to visit the church, which includes Catholics and tourists alike. To recall pastor Hellemons's motivation for the Basilica, he wanted a "religious memory of the blissful days I spent in the sanctuaries of the Holy city" (Van Casteren 1970, 60). Similar sentiments can be found amongst the reviews on the tourist website *TripAdvisor*, as Mpowereurope writes: "This is beautiful monument. You don't have to go to Rome."[35] And Robniek says: "The nice thing is, it is a small reproduction of the St. Peter's in Rome. So you don't have to travel all the way to Italy for seeing it."[36] These quotes echo the idea that the Holy Agatha and Barbara is interesting, primarily because of its relation to the St. Peter's and it is because of that connection that the building's use value increases.

So far two things can be concluded: Riegl's monumental values cannot be imitated and these often develop without referencing the St. Peter's. Only art and use value contradict the second conclusion, because these values are necessarily connected to the original. However, I argue that Riegl's deliberate commemorative value is an exception to the first conclusion. Imitated elements, such as the *Baldacchino* and the *Cattedra Petri,* propagate the same message as the one in Rome, thus emphasizing the greatness of the Church and the legitimacy of the pope. This can be nuanced by the fact that the Holy Agatha and Barbara has its own, unique topics of commemoration such as the zouaves, the life of pastor Hellemons and the old Holy Agatha and Barbara church. Nonetheless, the imitated elements do create a story that overlaps with the St. Peter's, thereby suggesting that this is the only monumental value that can be imitated.

Overall, similar dynamics appear in the additional case studies in Montreal and Yamoussoukro. As with the Holy Agatha and Barbara, historical value emphasizes the unique history of these churches. In this context the Mary, Queen of the World Cathedral is an example of the strife between Protestants and Catholics in nineteenth century Montreal and the Our Lady of Peace Basilica is a physical representation of Houphouët-Boigny's megalomania and wanton corruption. Concerning art value, we again see the inevitability of references to the St. Peter's. The website *Canada's Historic Places*, a platform supported by Canada's federal, provincial and territorial governments, describes the Cathedral as being

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[35]   Mpowereurope, "Moet je echt eens bezoeken," *Tripadvisor.com*, September 2017, accessed July 20, 2020.
[36]   Robniek, "geweldige belevenis,"*Tripadvisor.com*, February 2015, accessed July 20, 2020.

"inspired by the architecture and imposing dimensions of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome".[37] Similarly, the many commentaries on the Our Lady of Peace Basilica reference the aesthetics of the St. Peter's too.[38] Only deliberate commemorative value shows a discontinuity between these cases. The Mary, Queen of the World is much like the Holy Agatha and Barbara, containing imitated artworks that reproduce the message of the St. Peter's. But The Our Lady of Peace does not show as much overlapping deliberate commemorative value. Because of Houphouët-Boigny's objective of self-glorification, he adjusted imitated elements, such as the dome and the *Baldacchino,* to move away from messages related to the Vatican. This Basilica thus echoes the ideologies enclosed in the St. Peter's to a much lesser extent.

In conclusion, this analysis of Riegl's monumental values in the imitations of the St. Peter's indicates on the one hand a move away from the original and on the other hand the inevitable intertwinement with this Roman Basilica. Historical value, newness value and age value especially constitute this move away, because these all emphasize the unique history and development of the imitated Basilica. In contrast, the intertwinement with the St. Peter's is best explained by its deliberate commemorative value. Here the imitations actually reproduce the message of the St. Peter's. In addition, the imitation's art and use value demonstrate that references to the St. Peter's are unavoidable, as reproduced elements are always defined in relation to their original example.

Up to this point my analysis only identified the basics of the relationship between the Holy Agatha and Barbara and the St. Peter's. However, whilst it is evident that the unique "life" (Kopytoff 1986) of the Basilica provides a move away from the St. Peter's, it is not yet clear how *precisely* the relationship with the original works wherever references to the St. Peter's appear. For example, why do these similarities add to the art value? What makes these so interesting? Furthermore, I have not yet addressed whether the experience of the St. Peter's is affected by its imitations. In the next section I will go back to my findings from chapter 3 to further explain these issues in the relationship between the two churches.

4.3 A Spiritual Account of Art: The Inner Workings of Imitation Appreciation

To find out how the similarities add art value precisely, I will treat artworks as a sensational form. Meyer's theory allows such a combination of art-historical and spiritual

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[37] "Marie-Reine-du-Monde Cathedral National Historic Site of Canada," *Historicplaces.ca*, n.d., accessed July 20, 2020.
[38] See for example: McDonnel, Tim, "Photos: The World's Largest Church Is in the Middle of an African Coconut Plantation," *Motherjones.com*, July 25, 2014, accessed July 20, 2020; Strochlic, Nina, "The Largest Church in the World Has The Fewest Worshippers," *Thedailybeast.com*, April 14, 2017, accessed July 20, 2020.

perspectives, because she calls the sacred as that what goes "*beyond the ordinary*" (2015, 18; italics added). Simultaneously, she consciously refrains from defining the "ordinary" or that what lies beyond it, thereby allowing the reader to interpret this on his or her own. As a consequence, sacredness can also apply to non-religious practices, including art. David Morgan incorporates this thinking into his description of the sacralization of art, as he argues that by "accentuation and affiliation" art enters a spiritual realm:

> The combined actions [of accentuation and affiliation] set out an art work as special, endowing it with an aura or presence that commands attention. But for anything like the vaunted stature of religious aura, that is, the revelation of a divine reality, the history of modern art offers an additional layer of distinction: art that some consider to command universal attention for revealing something more compelling than the material, commercial, and temporary concerns of everyday life. Kandinsky called this the spiritual in art, and Tillich called this the revelation of ultimate reality. This is not religious art, or a religion of art, or art taking the place of religion, but is better described as the sacralization of art, the endowment of art with a capacity for revelation by virtue of its accentuation as special objects and its effect on the people who admire it (2017, 649).

Artworks thus potentially go beyond the ordinary and become a kind of sacred entity. For this reason we can apply terms such as sensational form and sacred capital to art too.

Now that I have established that the sacred also applies to the valuation of artworks, I will discuss whether imitation elicits the same effects as I mentioned in chapter 3. The presence, or absence, of these dynamics clarifies how Riegl's monumental values increase or decrease, or, put differently, whether the art-historical experience of the Holy Agatha and Barbara acquires an extra layer by its connection to the St. Peter's. To align the spiritual and art-historical perspectives, I have chosen to express this increase or decrease in monumental value in sacred capital. If the sacredness of the artwork gets enhanced, then art value, historical value – or any value depending on the topic – increases.

To start off with the reminding effects of similarities, I argue, like in chapter 3, that the imitation's sacred capital increases as the connection to the St. Peter's adds an extra layer to the art-historical experience. These parallels invite the visitor to recall the art of the St. Peter's, thereby making the encounter special. Secondly, the Basilica presents a sensational form towards the St. Peter's. This is more or less the same phenomenon as the devotion to the St. Peter's of pastor Hellemons. He firmly believed in the sacredness of the St. Peter's design,

hence the church was itself a "beyond". When it comes to an art-historical appreciation of the St. Peter's, the building can also be considered to be beyond the ordinary: The most renowned artists worked on the Basilica resulting in countless artworks including the Pieta, the dome, the *Baldacchino* and so on, making the St. Peter's a work of art that is truly exceptional. The imitated artworks of the Holy Agatha and Barbara thus provide, as sensational forms, a movement towards the exceptionality of the St. Peter's.

Concerning auxiliary sensational forms, I argue that these are not present in the imitated Basilica from an art-historical point of view. In chapter 3 I showed that the art of the St. Peter's provides a movement towards the "beyond", which is the world of God and saints, which implies a three layered auxiliary sensational form: The imitation (1) points to the St. Peter's (2) and the St. Peter's points to the world of saints and God (3). This third layer of the spiritual world of saints and God is not present in a purely art-historical appreciation of the Basilica, thus ruling out an auxiliary sensational form. Nevertheless, it can be argued that some people *do* experience a spiritual "beyond" when observing artworks. This would then create that third layer, potentially producing an auxiliary sensational form. However, to this I respond that this is not an "authorized procedure", which is a prerequisite for a sensational form, according to Meyer (2015, 20), where sensational forms have to be sanctioned by an authority to evoke a sense of the "beyond". This is not the case in the aforementioned example, because there are no art-historical authorities that say that artworks are a medium for a spiritual experience. Perhaps there are some, but then they are probably only a very small, negligible, group. Following Meyer's definition of sensational forms, it is thus possible that artworks produce a spiritual "beyond", but because this is not the result of an authorized procedure this does not constitute a sensational form. Based on this reasoning I rule out that the Holy Agatha and Barbara provides an auxiliary sensational form from an art-historical perspective.

Additionally, the sacred capital of the Holy Agatha and Barbara increases independently from the St. Peter's as an *imitation in itself*. Currently there is a widespread fascination with imitated art in the Western World (Boon 2010; Becker, Fischer and Schmitz 2018). To name a few examples of the popularity of imitations, one can point to the *Museum of Art Fakes* in Vienna, the *Museum of Fake Art* in Vledder, The Netherlands, the exhibition *Close Examination: Fakes Mistakes and Discoveries* (2010) in the *National Gallery* in London and the *Brooklyn Museum's* exhibition *Copyright Murakami* (2008), which displayed imitated Louis Vuitton bags. This fascination with imitation per se is also found in descriptions of the Basilica. Accounts of the Holy Agatha and Barbara do not simply say that

it *bears similarities* with the St. Peter's, but they consistently call the Basilica a *copy*. In the preceding section I already illustrated this with quotes from *Het Grootste Museum,* the book *Kerkinterieurs in Nederland* and reviews from *TripAdvisor,* revealing that this feature of the Basilica is primarily striking. With this in mind it is quite thinkable that an imitation of, say the Notre Dame would attract similar attention. On the whole I conclude that the similarities with the St. Peter's, and the presence of imitation in itself, increases the sacred capital of the Holy Agatha and Barbara.

So far I have only discussed how the St. Peter's affects the Holy Agatha and Barbara. But does it also work the other way around? Does the Basilica in Oudenbosch influence the sacred capital of the St. Peter's? As explained in chapter 3, it is likely that the Roman Basilica evokes memories of the Holy Agatha and Barbara for that small group of people who have visited both, thereby adding an extra layer to the experience. However, it is virtually inconceivable that the St. Peter's functions as a sensational form with regard to the Basilica in Oudenbosch. By this I mean it is unlikely that a visitor of the St. Peter's experiences a movement towards the imitation in Oudenbosch as the "beyond". This does not imply that I deny that people can experience the artworks of the imitation as "beyond the ordinary," I simply argue that this sensation will evaporate once the visitor finds himself in the St. Peter's. After all, the Basilica in Oudenbosch is, in all aspects, inferior to the St. Peter's: The church is smaller, the materials used are less expensive, the decorations less extensive and the artists who worked on the church are so much less renowned than the ones who worked on the St. Peter's. In other words, compared to the St. Peter's it is far-fetched that the Holy Agatha and Barbara presents a "beyond". Therefore I contend that the St. Peter's does not provide a sensational form *towards* the Basilica in Oudenbosch. In addition, as already explained above, the presence of an auxiliary sensational form can be ruled out in an art-historical account of the two churches. This leaves us with the issue whether the imitations diminish or increase the St. Peter's sacrality as an artwork. Here I would like to go back to Benjamin's notion of aura, because he argued that imitations decrease the original's aura, thus the obvious question is whether St. Peter imitations cause this too. However, this issue is merely the tip of the iceberg as a connection between aura and sacred capital has rather complex consequences.

It is not new to connect aura and sacrality to each other (see Hegarty 2003; Branham 1995; Buggeln 2012 and Rickly-Boyd 2012 for example). Regardless, I argue that such a connection will result in a paradox. Let me first explain how I see the relation between sacredness and aura. A sense of the sacred is necessarily a part of aura, because it contributes to the uniqueness of an artwork, as it increases that feeling of distance that Benjamin

describes. In other words, the "beyond" is a component of aura. Moving on, sensational forms provide a movement towards aura, however, these can only keep aura intact or enhance it, because otherwise they would neutralize themselves. This is still in line with Meyer's conception of sensational forms, as she argues that these are constructive parts of a relation with the sacred, not destructive (2015, 20). According to this reasoning, the imitations of the St. Peter's are sensational forms, which ensure the St. Peter's aura / sacredness and perhaps even enhance it.[39] But what to make of Benjamin's idea that reproductions decrease the original's aura then? This is where this issue gets really complicated. Consider the example of the Mona Lisa, a painting which is no longer strictly confined to a museum, but appears in books, films, and also printed on mugs or towels and the likes. The widespread reproduction of the painting confronts people with the image even before they get to see the painting in reality, allowing people to develop a perception of it before they actually see the original. As a consequence, whenever they get to see the original eventually, people are not as impressed any more as the image no longer holds any secrets, or it perhaps seems to be rather small for its exalted status; the distance that the painting once embodied has been destroyed by these reproductions. This may be a rather extreme example, as reproductions of the Mona Lisa are much more widespread compared to the images of imitation in this study. Still, for those who have visited the Basilica in Oudenbosch, the experience of the St. Peter's may be somewhat less impressive as it may seem that they have seen it before, especially as imitations like the Holy Agatha and Barbara and the Our Lady of Peace "improved" certain aspects of the original, thereby potentially emphasizing the St. Peter's flaws during a tour of that edifice.

So how is it possible that, in this example, the original's aura is destroyed whereas I previously showed that imitations present sensational forms that ensure the survival of aura? The most obvious answer to this paradox is that in the latter example the original lost its sacredness and therefore its aura. However, I find this improbable. Imitations cannot take away the fact that the original Mona Lisa was painted by Leonardo DaVinci himself, that it marks a key moment in Renaissance art, or that it is displayed in one of the most famous museums in the world. On the whole, the original remains "beyond the ordinary". Another solution is that there is something wrong with the concept sensational form. How can sensational forms provide a move *towards* the sacred / aura whilst retaining this sacredness?

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[39] This ties in to Patrick Eisenlohr's argument that the medium "vanishes" in the face of what is mediated (2009, 9); it (temporally) disappears when the "beyond" is reached. However, my concern is not whether the medium survives, but whether the "beyond" persists. Meyer illustrates that the temporal disappearance of the medium does not destroy the sensational form's relation with the "beyond" in the article "Mediation and immediacy: sensational forms, semiotic ideologies and the question of the medium" where she addresses Eisenlohr's theory (2011, 32).

Does a move *towards* the sacred / aura not imply that the distance between the ordinary and the "beyond" is lifted? But if that is the case, a sensational form would eliminate itself and that is not possible according to Meyer. I argue that particularly ethnographic fieldwork can shed light on a solution to this paradox, because this has the potential to show – in detail – how people actually experience aura and art-historical sacredness. However, for now I must conclude that the imitations either enhance or diminish the sacred capital of the St. Peter's, whilst it will remain unclear as to how or why either possibility takes place.

4.4 Conclusion: A Move Away from the Focus on St. Peter's?

I started this chapter with the question as to how an art-historical experience Holy Agatha and Barbara gets influenced by, or influences, the experience of the St. Peter's. I posited this question in comparison to my findings reported in chapter 3, where I concluded that the spiritual encounter with the Basilica of Oudenbosch mainly focuses the believer's attention to the original in Rome. In this chapter I found that this also happens from an art-historical perspective, but to a somewhat lesser extent. The monumental values of the Holy Agatha and Barbara cannot be imitated, with the exception of deliberate commemorative value, which causes an emphasis on the unique features of the Basilica. This applies especially to its historical, age and newness values. Nevertheless, with regard to art value and use value, the focus on the St. Peter's reappears as these values cannot be defined without reference to the Roman Basilica. In the second part of this chapter I used my findings from chapter 3 and reapplied these to the art of the two churches to specify how the relationship with the St. Peter's adds an extra layer to the experience of the Holy Agatha and Barbara. Here I showed that the sacred capital of the Basilica is enhanced by reminding people of the original and by providing a sensational form towards it. However, I also argued that the sacred capital increases without reference to the St. Peter's, simply because of the current art-historic interest in imitation per se. In all, I conclude that the art-historic approach to the Holy Agatha and Barbara provides a slight move away from the focus on the St. Peter's, especially in comparison to the religious approach discussed in chapter 3.

In my analysis of how the Holy Agatha and Barbara influences the experience of the St. Peter's I found three things. Firstly, it is likely that the St. Peter's reminds people of the Holy Agatha and Barbara too for those who have visited both churches. Secondly, it is unlikely that the St. Peter's provides a sensational form towards the Basilica in Oudenbosch, because the Holy Agatha and Barbara is, in all aspects, not a "*beyond*" compared to the St. Peter's. Lastly, the combination of Benjamin's theory of aura with Meyer's notion of

sensational forms ends in a paradox, where I cannot determine for certain how the imitation affects the sacred capital of the original. As a sensational form the imitation preserves and enhances the aura of the original, but from Benjamin's perspective the imitation already gives a taste of the original experience, thereby diminishing the original's aura.

5. The Holy Agatha and Barbara as a Heritage Site: Between the Vatican's and Dutch National Interests

Introduction

In this chapter I analyse how the Holy Agatha and Barbara connects to the St. Peter's as a heritage site by contrasting two perspectives on heritage conservation. Firstly, I consider the Church's views on heritage as a spiritual force that also complements the Vatican's political goals. Secondly I analyse the Dutch national heritage framework, where religious heritage is regarded as a sign of a collective Christian past. With regard to the former, heritage is employed as an evangelizing means, as a boost for piety and as evidence of God's presence among humanity, whereas in the latter churches have social, aesthetic and economic purposes too. I argue that these two distinct perspectives result into two different aesthetic formations, because both perspectives propagate a distinct way of experiencing a monument like the Holy Agatha and Barbara resulting in different feelings of belonging to a certain community. This way, the Basilica is interesting for the Vatican as a site that repeats the messages of the St. Peter's on the one hand, whereas on the other the Basilica is relevant for many Dutch national and regional parties as a sign of a shared Christian past. In all, I conclude that the Basilica remains connected to the St. Peter's from the Church's point of view, because from this perspective it is actually relevant what messages the church conveys. This relationship is less important in the Dutch national framework, because here it is primarily relevant as to how the Basilica signifies a Christian past.

5.1 The St. Peter's and Its Imitations as Spiritual Heritage

Based on several publications written since the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) I argue that the Church preserves its heritage with mainly three objectives in mind: Heritage is an evangelizing means, it has the potential to educate and promote piety and it is proof of God's presence in the history of humanity. These aims are most plainly expressed in the policy letters "The Cultural Heritage of the Church and Religious Families" (1994)[40] and "Towards a Pastoral Approach to Culture" (1999)[41], as well as pope John Paul's II address to

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[40] "Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Patrimony of the Church. Rome, April 10, 1994," *Vatican.va*, n.d., accessed July 20, 2020.

[41] "Pontifical Council for Culture. Towards a Pastoral Approach to Culture," *Vatican.va.*, n.d., accessed July 20, 2020.

the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church in 2000[42] and pope Francis's speech at a conference of the Pontifical Commission for Culture in 2018[43]. Francis's speech especially illustrates the Vatican's views on heritage:

> Following the thought of the ecclesial Magisterium, we can therefore almost formulate a theological discourse on cultural heritage, considering that it is part of the sacred liturgy, of evangelization and of the exercise of charity. In fact, they are in the first place among those "things" (res) that are (or were) instruments of worship (…). The common sense of the faithful perceives for the environments and objects destined for worship the permanence of a kind of imprint that does not end even after they have lost that role. Furthermore, ecclesiastical cultural assets are witnesses to the faith of the community that has produced them over the centuries, and for this reason they are in their own way instruments of evangelization that accompany the usual tools of proclamation, preaching and catechesis.[44]

The Vatican thus consistently frames heritage in relation to religious practice and heritage sites are therefore sensational forms that help believers get closer to the world of God and saints. However, I argue that this spiritual perspective on heritage serves political goals as well, as evangelization, education and the promotion of piety all stimulate the growth and stability of the Church's community. I contend that this is political, because this way heritage shapes socio-cultural structures and identities in support of a particular state structure (Ashworth 1994, 13). In fact it is widely acknowledged among scholars of cultural heritage that heritage functions in essence politically as it shapes and bonds social groups (see Ashworth and Tunbridge 1999; Cheung 2003; Harvey 2001; Meyer and De Witte 2013 and Smith 2006 for example). Hence the Vatican endeavours to simultaneously employ heritage as a sensational form and as a community-building force, whilst they conceptualize these goals in a spiritual fashion.

 With this dual goal in mind, the St. Peter's is probably one of the most – if not the most – important heritage sites for the Catholic Church. Firstly, recalling chapter 1, the St. Peter's is the ultimate example of how the Church has intertwined sensational forms and political interests. The Basilica emphasizes the sacred presence of the apostle Peter in order to

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[42] "Address of the Holy Father John Paul II to the Members, Consultors and Staff of the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church. Friday, 31 March 2000," *W2.vatican.va*, n.d., accessed July 20, 2020.

[43] "Message of the Holy Father Francis to Participants at the Conference "Doesn't God Dwell Here Anymore? Decommissioning Places of Worship and Integrated Management of Ecclesiastical Cultural Heritage." (Pontifical Gregorian University, 29-30 November 2018)," *Vatican.va*, n.d., accessed July 20, 2020.

[44] Ibid.

generate a feeling of closeness to this saint for the pilgrim, whilst simultaneously exploiting Peter's presence to propagate the legitimacy of the pope's function as the spiritual ruler of the world. Secondly, the St. Peter's attracts huge numbers of pilgrims and tourists. This flood of visitors gives the Church the ultimate opportunity to strengthen its grip on pilgrims as well as the opportunity to evangelize non-Catholic tourists.[45] Generally, the St. Peter's presents an amalgam of the Church's spiritual and political goals.

So what does this mean for the Holy Agatha and Barbara in Oudenbosch? In the first place, the Church's views on heritage also apply to the Basilica just like these apply to any monumental Catholic church in the world. However, I contend that this church has a special standing in the worldwide network of Catholic heritage, because it is an imitation of the St. Peter's. On the one hand, the Basilica evokes memories of the St. Peter's, as shown in chapter 3 and 4, but on the other hand, the church repeats the message of the St. Peter's with its deliberate commemorative value, which is the message of closeness to the divine coupled with a validation of the papacy. This means that the Holy Agatha and Barbara provides the Church with a *second chance* to utilize the heritage of the St. Peter's for evangelization, for the promotion of piety or to memorialise the presence of God amongst mankind. It is through these dynamics of mirroring and reminding of the original that the Holy Agatha and Barbara connects to the St. Peter's as a heritage site.

5.2 From a Spiritual Perspective to a Non-Religious Outlook: Christianity as a National Identity Marker

Other than being included in the worldwide network of Roman Catholic heritage, the Holy Agatha and Barbara participates in a national, Dutch heritage framework too. I argue that the use of Catholic heritage sites – such as the Holy Agatha and Barbara – for national purposes obscures the monument's relation to the Vatican via a diverging view on the meaning of such sites and the functions that follow from that. In this section I will analyse the Dutch government's perspective on Catholic heritage and, in the next section, I will address the functions. As it turns out, the philosophy behind the government's heritage policy centres on the concept of Christianity as a national identity marker.

The use of Christianity as an identity marker is not unique to the Netherlands, as this also occurs in many other (Western) European countries (Astor, Griera and Burchardt 2017; Storm 2017; Schlesinger and Foret 2006). This is in essence the result of political and societal

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[45]   "Pontifical Council for Culture. Towards a Pastoral Approach to Culture," *Vatican.va.*, n.d., accessed July 20, 2020.

debates on national identity, which emerged in response to several societal processes, including the deepening of European integration, religious diversification as a result of migration and the heightened activism of both religious and secularist groups (Astor, Griera and Burchardt 2017, 128). In this context many countries look at Christianity as part of the answer of what it means to be Dutch, Spanish or French and so forth. Also, these are countries where the community of Christians is declining. In the Netherlands only twenty-four percent of the population identified themselves as Roman-Catholic in 2017 and fifteen percent identified themselves as belonging to Protestant denominations.[46] Moreover, the majority of people in these groups rarely or never attends church services.[47] These dwindling numbers notwithstanding, politicians are not discouraged from framing Christianity as a major contributor to the national identity, which was illustrated during the political campaigns prior to the Dutch Second Chamber elections in 2017 when many political parties portrayed themselves as protectors of the Judaeo-Christian tradition (Van den Hemel 2017a). Prime minister Mark Rutte demonstrated how this manifests itself in 2016, when he was a guest speaker during a service in the Protestant Duinzicht Church in The Hague. It was a so called "preek van de leek" (layman's sermon), a phenomenon that has become common in the Netherlands after a successful experiment with lay speakers between 2008 and 2012.[48] In his "sermon" Rutte praised the influence Christianity has had on the Dutch national character:

> I consider myself to be a child of the Dutch Protestant Christian culture. And I count myself lucky with the imaginative capital, the talents, that I inherited from this. It is a culture of working hard and taking responsibility for your own actions. Of not giving up when things go wrong. (…) And of not thinking of yourself as being more important than anyone else, because everyone deserves the same respect (translation L.V.).[49]

The discourse did not only focus on Christian norms and values as Christian feasts and holidays are thought to be of importance to Dutch culture too. Consider for example the public outcry around the spring catalogue of Dutch convenience store Hema in 2016, which was heavily criticized by politicians for advertising "hiding eggs" instead of the traditional "Easter eggs";

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[46]   "Meer dan de helft Nederlanders niet religieus," *Cbs.nl*, 22 October, 2018, accessed July 20, 2020.
[47]   Ibid.
[48]   "Experiment preek van de leek geslaagd," *Preekvandeleek.nl*, n.d., accessed July 20, 2020.
[49]   "Preek van de leek door minister-president Rutte in de Duinzichtkerk," *Rijksoverheid.nl*, November 6, 2016, accessed July 20, 2020.

This was seen as scandalous for two reasons. Firstly, in the eyes of Hema's critics, the cover of the catalogue should have used the word Easter instead of 'spring'. The use of the word 'spring' was seen as kowtowing to political correctness and as bending the knee to Islam. Analogously, the fact that the eggs in question were called 'hiding eggs' (verstopeieren) instead of the more common 'Easter eggs' (paaseieren) was seen as being problematic. Such things were perceived to be tell-tale signs that Hema was self-censuring central elements of the Dutch national identity. Liberal politician Halbe Zijlstra stated that Hema put the country on a 'slippery slope' and that the convenience store was sacrificing core tenets of national identity. PVV politicians described Hema's actions as 'cultural suicide' and 'self-islamization', and demanded debates in parliament and answers from the government (Van den Hemel 2017b, 3-4).

A spokesperson of Hema eventually cleared up that the "hiding eggs" were just a variation on the traditional "Easter" eggs, because there were a number of chocolate eggs with a single golden egg hidden amongst these (ibid., 4), the idea being that children could hunt for this special egg. Moreover, the spokesperson explained that the catalogue still contained the word "Easter" twenty-two times and that Hema decided to call it a "spring" catalogue so they could use it for a longer period (ibid.). Overall, the controversy was undue and unjustified. The public outcry illustrates nonetheless how important Christian holidays apparently are in the discourse on Dutch national culture, as the celebration of Easter is attached to the national identity and contrasted with the "exterior" Islamic culture. This outrage shows again that Christianity is employed as an identity marker because it provides myths, metaphors and symbols for the representation of the nation (Brubaker 2012, 9).

While the examples above indicate that Christian culture is important to the Dutch identity, it remains rather unclear what this "Judaeo-Christian tradition" actually includes. Considering the strife between Protestants and Catholics throughout Dutch history, it is not at all evident that Catholicism is included in "Christianity". In fact, the term Christian was for a long time used to indicate Protestant communities, not Catholic ones (Smit 2017, 23). Furthermore, bearing my case study of the Holy Agatha and Barbara Basilica in mind, is church architecture included as a sign of Dutch Christian culture? To start with the issue of the general inclusion of Catholicism, I argue that nowadays it is incorporated in the term Judaeo-Christian. This can be explained by the fact that the inclusion of Catholics – and Jews – fortifies and unifies the idea of a shared Christian heritage, with the ultimate intention of excluding Muslims (De Waal 2020; Smit 2017; Topolski 2016; Van den Hemel 2017a). This indirectly proves that the Judaeo-Christian tradition is largely a fabrication, because it requires

selective forgetting and the jumbling of facts (Lowenthal 1998, 12) in order to erase those aspects that undermine the idea of a harmonious Christian heritage. Moreover, as Dutch people are leaving church communities with such an alacrity, people are simply becoming indifferent to what is Protestant and what is Catholic. On the one hand it is thus forgotten that Catholics were for a long time, excluded from being under the umbrella of Dutch Christianity, whilst on the other hand people fail to remember the differences between Protestantism and Catholicism. As a result it is completely normal these days that a televised passion play[50] – originally a Catholic practice – attracts millions of viewers, or that the Protestant prime minister visits a Catholic Church during Easter to light a candle.[51]

Although politicians often prefer to just single out Christian holidays and feasts as symbols of Dutch national culture, church architecture is one of these signs too. This is expressed by the *Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed* (National Agency for Cultural Heritage), which started a "National Church Approach" in 2018 to preserve churches as national heritage sites in the face of declining church attendance. Furthermore, multiple policy documents on the issue of religious heritage describe the importance of church architecture in relation to the national identity. For example, the 2011 brochure *Een toekomst voor kerken* (A future for churches) states that "Churches symbolize the Christian foundations of Dutch culture and society and these are therefore co-determining for the socio-cultural identity of the Netherlands" (translation L.V.).[52] Another example is the guide *Bouwstenen voor een kerkenvisie* (Building blocks for a church vision) which states that churches:

> Constitute an important part of *who we are*. They colour the streets and determine the landscape. Churches are full of meaning, surrounded by emotions. These are buildings that most Dutch people want to cherish; even if oneself does not go to church anymore (translation L.V.; italics added).[53]

Churches are thus acknowledged as symbols of the Dutch national identity. Moreover, they can attain the status of "rijksmonument" (national monument), which is basically an official recognition of their art-historical value for Dutch culture. The Holy Agatha and Barbara

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[50] This refers to the annual passion play *The Passion*, which is organized by cooperating Protestant and Catholic broadcasters. See "The passion. Veelgestelde vragen," *Thepassion.nl*, n.d., accessed July 20, 2020.

[51] "Rutte brandt kaarsje in Haagse Sint-Jacobuskerk," *Kro-ncrv.nl*, April 8, 2020, accessed July 20, 2020.

[52] "Een toekomst voor kerken. Handreiking voor het aanpassen van kerkgebouwen in religieus gebruik," Amersfoort: *Rijksdienst voor het cultureel erfgoed*, 2011, p. 14.

[53] "Bouwstenen voor een kerkenvisie. Handreiking 2019," Amersfoort: *Rijksdienst voor het cultureen erfgoed*, 2019, p. 3.

Basilica has the status of "rijksmonument" and it is therefore a formal symbol of Dutch culture and society.

The Dutch national framework thus differs from the Church's perspective in the following way: Whereas the Vatican views religious heritage as having primarily spiritual purposes (from which political functions flow), the Dutch national government regards it first and foremost as a national identity marker. Nevertheless, the religious dimension is in this profane setting not far away. As Meyer notes that "the setting apart of certain cultural forms as "heritage" taps into religious registers of sacralization" (2013, 277), David Lowenthal argues the same as he sees that heritage invokes a certain piety in people, consisting of beliefs and devotional practices:

> The creed of heritage answers needs for ritual devotion, especially where other formal faith has become perfunctory or mainly political. Like religious causes, heritage fosters exhilarating fealties. For no other commitment do peoples so readily take up arms. Once a dilettante pastime, the pursuit and defence of patrimonial legacies is now likened to the Crusades—bitter, protracted and ruthless (1998, 7).

I recognize this dimension in the Dutch case too, as politicians present themselves as protectors of the Dutch Judaeo-Christian tradition, they publicly advocate the importance of Christian traditions and they sometimes even propose to protect these traditions by law (Van Den Hemel 2017a, 9). Citizens do also participate in these defensive practices as it often happens that residents protest against the destruction of abandoned churches (Beekers 2017). There are celebratory practices around the country's Christian heritage as well. There are "open church days", for example, where churches are opened for non-religious visitors to be admired.[54] Bearing this in mind I maintain that the Dutch governmental perspective is not so different from the Church's views after all; like the *Baldacchino* in the St. Peter's brings the pilgrim closer to the "beyond" of the apostle Peter, the Holy Agatha and Barbara may lead the spectator towards the higher idea of a collective Dutch, Christian identity. In the next section I will therefore analyse what the functions of heritage are within the national framework in order to further explain how these two perspectives differ from each other.

Churches, like the Holy Agatha and Barbara, are thus mobilized in the discourse on Judaeo-Christian traditions. How does this compare to the imitations in Montreal and Yamoussoukro? As it turns out, the national contexts of these cases cannot be compared to the

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[54] "Open Kerkendag Brabant en Zeeland," *Toekomstreligieuserfgoed.nl*, March 27, 2019, accessed July 20, 2020.

one in the Netherlands. The Canadian context resembles the Dutch one somewhat, yet the use of religion for identity politics is mostly avoided there because public debates on national identity in Canada focus more on linguistics or on cultural and provincial rights (Bean Gonzalez and Kaufman 2008, 905). Moreover, the idea of a Christian national identity is considered to be "American", while Canadians like to define themselves as being "un-American" (ibid., 899; McKeen 2015, 38). Thus the use of Christianity as an identity marker is not mainstream in that country, although it should be acknowledged that a small Christian Right movement exists over there, mostly represented by the Christian Heritage Party (McKeen 2015). In the context of this reserved attitude towards Christianity in the political sphere, religious monuments were not even recognized as heritage for a long time. Only since 1970 churches and other Catholic artworks are recognized as national monuments based on their "historic and/or architectural significance".[55] However, the case of Ivory Coast is entirely different. As a result of the colonial era the country consists of four major ethnic groups whose cultural origins extend beyond Ivory Coast's borders (Knutsen 2008, 159). Moreover, there is a division between the Christian south and the Muslim north while there are also approximately sixty different languages spoken in the country (ibid., 162). Generally, these differences prevents the formation of a national Ivorian identity and in fact often instigate civil war-like situations. Over the years, political leaders often tried to formulate a national identity, but they often only paralleled their own ethnic and regional roots which certainly did not help much (Woods 2003, 651). President Houphouët-Boigny himself is an example of this as he tried to impose Catholicism on the entire population. Overall, the country has not yet identified a historic myth to base its collective identity on (Knutsen 2008, 159). Due to space constraints I am only able to give a general overview of the Ivory Coast situation, still, this encapsulation clarifies why Christianity is hardly a national identity marker: Many Ivorians do not even adhere to Christianity, which makes it is illogical for them to embrace Christianity as a symbol of their national identity.

5.3 The National Functions of St. Peter Imitations

Up to this point I have shown that the Basilica belongs to the discourse of the Dutch Judaeo-Christian tradition. In this section I will further explore what functions the church has within this context in order to show how this results in a different encounter as opposed to the experience propagated by the Church. I argue that there are three parties that exploit the Holy

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[55]   "Criteria, General Guidelines, Specific Guidelines for evaluating subjects of potential national historic significance," Gatineau: *Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada*, 2007. p.7.

Agatha and Barbara as a monument within the Dutch national heritage framework, namely the *Rijksdienst voor Cultureel Erfgoed*, the *Museum Catharijneconvent* and the *Stichting Promotie Basiliek Oudenbosch* (Foundation for the Promotion of the Basilica Oudenbosch). Each of these parties have purposes for the Basilica rooted in the idea that this church is a symbol of the Dutch national identity. These functions can be summarized as follows:

(1) Social functions: The Basilica as a site where people can learn about the collective Christian, Dutch identity, thereby strengthening social cohesion;

(2) Aesthetic functions: The Basilica as a site where people come to admire historical values and art values;

(3) Economic functions: The Basilica as a site that generates financial income.

To start with the *Rijksdienst* the Dutch state recognizes the Holy Agatha and Barbara as a "rijksmonument" as I explained in the previous section, meaning that the Basilica is subject to the national heritage policy. The current government formulates the function of heritage in the policy letter "Erfgoed telt" (heritage counts), as follows:

Everywhere in the Netherlands there are mills, castles, archaeological sites, neighbourhoods and landscapes that keep history relevant and that touch people. They tell stories about where we come from, who we are and how we evolve. During great changes in our environment heritage provides both recognition and something to hold on to. Moreover, monuments, historic city centres and cultural landscapes have a value in themselves: These are carriers of the past which we cherish for their meaning and beauty. (…) This is the vision from which I want to protect heritage and maintain accessibility; the conviction that heritage counts for its historical value, for its value to our living environment and for its binding value (transl. L.V.).[56]

This excerpt indicates that heritage has a socially binding function as it tells something about the Dutch identity and that it has an art-historical value in itself, because its history and beauty alone are worthy of appreciation. Although an explicit acknowledgement of heritage's economic functions lacks in this passage, the letter does indicate that economic growth is of importance to the "living environment" by stating that "Since the modernization of monument conservation in 2009 and the Vision Heritage and Space, there is more attention for heritage in the living environment. Municipalities draw increasingly often a connection between heritage

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[56] "Erfgoed telt. De betekenis van erfgoed voor de samenleving," Den Haag: *Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap*, 2018, p. 3.

and the local economy, tourism and education" (transl. L.V).[57] Within this framework the Holy Agatha and Barbara thus functions as a socially binding mechanism, as a site for the appreciation of historic and art values and as an economic asset.

The *Museum Catharijneconvent* further expands on these functions. It is a Dutch museum for Christian art and has the status of "rijksmuseum" (national museum), which means that the government owns part of the collection and grants the museum subsidies to keep it functioning. The Holy Agatha and Barbara connects to the *Museum* via the exhibition *Het Grootste Museum van Nederland* (The Biggest Museum of the Netherlands). This is a collection of sixteen remarkable churches throughout the Netherlands that stand out for their exceptional history, architecture and artworks,[58] including, amongst others the St. John in Gouda and the Dom Church in Utrecht. By participating in this exhibition, the Holy Agatha and Barbara further positions itself as functioning for the good of Dutch society. The *Museum* views Christian heritage as a key element of Dutch society because of its history and beauty.[59] Building on this perspective, it is the *Museum's* mission to draw attention to the art and historical values of Dutch Christian heritage, with the ultimate aim of "gaining insight into our contemporary world".[60] *Het Grootste Museum* contributes to this mission because the idea behind the exposition is to make churches in the Netherlands more accessible to large audiences. The *Museum* only chose the nation's most remarkable churches, as these have the most potential to attract an audience. The Holy Agatha and Barbara is particularity suitable for this project, as it is a unique and spectacular imitation of the St. Peter's within the Netherlands. Reflecting on the aims of the *Museum* the social and aesthetic functions of the Basilica reappear. Through the exhibition visitors are invited to admire the remarkable art and history of the Basilica in relation to the Dutch collective identity.

So far I have only reflected on nationwide parties, but there is also the local *Stichting Promotie Basiliek* to consider. Their goal is to "promote the conservation of the Basilica of the Holy Agatha and Barbara of the Parish of Bernard of Clairvaux as a national and cultural-historic monument, and to execute anything that relates to or can be beneficial to this" (transl. L.V.)[61] This reveals that the *Stichting* adheres to the same perspective as the *Rijksdienst* and the *Museum*, because they view the church as a national and cultural-historic monument. However, it is interesting that they proclaim to do *anything* that promotes the conservation of

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[57]   "Erfgoed telt. De betekenis van erfgoed voor de samenleving," Den Haag: *Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap*, 2018, p. 5.
[58]   "Over het Grootste Museum van Nederland," *Grootstemuseum.nl*, n.d., accessed July 20, 2020.
[59]   "Beleidsplan 2017-2020," Utrecht: *Museum Catharijneconvent*, 2016, p. 5.
[60]   "Missie en Visie," *Catharijneconvent.nl*, n.d., accessed July 20, 2020.
[61]   "Stichting Behoude Basiliek Oudenbosch," *Stichtingbehoudbasiliek.nl*, n.d., accessed July 20, 2020.

the church. It can be reasoned that this includes both a religious and non-religious use of the building as any function will help ensure the preservation of the building (Petzet 2009, 7-8). Nevertheless, when analysing the foundation's website, it appears that the foundation mainly pursues non-religious interests in the building. Their website features overviews on the history of the church, what artworks can be seen as well as "fun facts". Moreover, the website contains details about tours and the museum shop. To illustrate my point, the website hardly contains any information about the religious meanings of the Basilica and does not even include an agenda of the parish's planned ceremonies. In summary, the *Stichting* is yet another party promoting the social and aesthetic functions of the Basilica.

The three parties mentioned all contribute to a certain way of experiencing the Holy Agatha and Barbara as a heritage site. The church is promoted as a site where one can learn about Dutch Christian history whilst it is also a place where remarkable art can be admired. Moreover, the monument generates financial income for the interested parties. All these functions are firmly rooted in the idea that religious heritage is of importance to Dutch society as it is a sign of a shared Christian past. Because the meaning of this particular kind of heritage is so loudly promoted by politicians, the *Rijksdienst,* the *Museum* and the *Stichting*, I argue that a distinct aesthetic formation emerges; these parties mobilize the Holy Agatha and Barbara as a symbol of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, which points the experience of the visitors in a certain direction. To illustrate, those who are informed by the *Rijksdienst* or *Museum* about Dutch Catholic heritage will conceptualize their experience of the Basilica in the context of Christianity as a Dutch identity marker. This contrasts with the aesthetic formation composed by the Vatican, which dictates that this experience should be spiritual in character. Similar dynamics appear in the Montreal and Yamoussoukro cases, although the non-religious purposes of these imitations do not follow from Christianity as an identity marker.

When looking at the Mary, Queen of the World Cathedral in the Canadian context, religious heritage is seen as one of many reference points for the national identity. The plan made by the Department of Canadian Heritage for 2020-2021 illustrates this by stating that the government wishes to foster multiculturalism and diversity, whilst simultaneously enhancing the people's knowledge of their shared Canadian history.[62] The Mary, Queen of the World Cathedral participates in this discourse as it has the status of a "national historic site of Canada", which is similar to a "rijksmonument" in the Dutch case. As was already mentioned, according to the governmental booklet *Criteria, General Guidelines, Specific Guidelines,* a

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[62]   "Canadian Heritage 2020–21 Departmental Plan," Gatineau: *Canadian Heritage*, 2020, pp. 2, 14.

religious building still in use – like this cathedral – can only attain such a status if it has either an "outstanding historical and / or architectural significance".[63] The website of Canada's historical places describes how The Mary, Queen of the World conforms to this in the following way: "It bears national importance because this cathedral is inspired by the architecture and imposing dimensions of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, and is the greatest symbol of ultramontanism in Canada."[64] Moreover, the website mentions "key elements contributing to the heritage value" of the church, such as local engineering techniques and features that show associations with bishop Bourget.[65] From this I can conclude that the Canadian government is primarily interested in the historic value of the building, which is deemed to be interesting by itself, but also has the potential to promote social cohesion as it shows a piece of shared Canadian history. Curiously, explicit mentions of the economic functions of the Cathedral – or heritage at large – are not being made here, despite the fact that the departmental plan stresses that the cultural industry contributes to the economic growth of Canada.[66]

With respect to the Our Lady of Peace the Ivorian government provides little sources that describe how the Basilica functions within the national heritage framework. Therefore I cannot draw any hard conclusions on this matter. Nevertheless, based on the most recent available list of national monuments featured in the *Annuaire des Statistiques Culturelles 2017* (Cultural Statistics Directory 2017), I conclude that the church is not a national monument, as the Basilica is not listed amongst the nation's cultural monuments.[67] The Ivorian Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, however, does promote the Basilica as a tourist attraction,[68] which indicates that the government sees this church as an economic asset.

5.4 Conclusion: The Imitation's Independence from the St. Peter's

I started this chapter by asking how the Holy Agatha and Barbara connects to the St. Peter's as a heritage site. First, I showed that the Vatican has a particular view on heritage as religious material: It is mainly an evangelizing means, educational, a boost for piety and evidence of God's presence amongst humanity. Within this framework the Holy Agatha and

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[63] "Criteria, General Guidelines, Specific Guidelines for evaluating subjects of potential national historic significance," Gatineau: *Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada*, 2007. p.7.
[64] "Marie-Reine-du-Monde Cathedral National Historic Site of Canada," *Historicplaces.ca*, n.d., accessed July 20, 2020.
[65] Ibid.
[66] "Canadian Heritage 2020–21 Departmental Plan," Gatineau: *Canadian Heritage*, 2020, p. 7.
[67] *"*Annuaire des Statistiques Culturelles 2017," Abidjan: *Ministère de la Culture et de la Francophonie*, 2017, pp. 8-13.
[68] See: "The Tourist Sites of Yamoussoukro," *tourisme.gouv.ic,* January 8, 2018, accessed July 21, 2020.

Barbara case is particularly interesting as an echo of the St. Peter's, as it gives the Church a *second chance* to convey the message of the St. Peter's. However, when I moved to the Dutch national heritage framework, the importance of the connection to the St. Peter's disappeared. From the latter perspective the Basilica is important as a sign and symbol of the Dutch Judaeo-Christian tradition with associated social, aesthetic and economic functions. This distinction between the two frameworks results into two different aesthetic formations to which the Basilica belongs: An aesthetic formation as dictated by the authorities of the Church and an aesthetic formation determined by Dutch national and local parties. The latter constitutes a further move away from the focus on the St. Peter's.

Conclusion

Summary and Return to the Research Question

I started this study by questioning how the experience of the Holy Agatha and Barbara Basilica is influenced by, or influences, the experience of the St. Peter's Basilica as the central medium in the aesthetic formation of Roman Catholicism. I approached this question from religious, art-historical and heritage perspectives. I also wanted to find out how the case of Oudenbosch relates to the larger practice of St. Peter imitation throughout the world, to which end I selected the Mary, Queen of the World Cathedral in Montreal and the Our Lady of Peace Basilica in Yamoussoukro as additional case studies. Before I embarked on the analysis of the experience from the three perspectives mentioned above, I did a phenomenology of both churches in order to illustrate what their actual similarities and differences were. Here I established that the Holy Agatha and Barbara contains many artworks that mirror the message of the St. Peter's, but there are artworks dedicated to Oudenbosch's own local Catholic history too. The first two chapters of this study paved the way for an in-depth analysis of the church's architecture and artworks.

In chapter 3 I drew the conclusion that a religious experience of the Holy Agatha and Barbara greatly directs the attention on the St. Peter's. Based on the words of pastor Hellemons, I found that the imitated elements of the church have four, closely intertwined effects: They remind of the St. Peter's, they provide auxiliary sensational forms, they enhance the Basilica's sacred capital and they are a manifestation of devotion to the St. Peter's itself. All this is generally approved of by the Vatican. According to the canons and decrees of the Council of Trent, the constitutions of the Second Vatican Council and the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the practice of imitation is regarded as an educational tool and as a means to stimulate piety. At the same time, there are little requirements for church architecture, which leads to the conclusion that imitated architecture is accepted as long as it is done "in good taste" and expresses the function of the building in a worthy manner. However, except for the memories brought about by similarities, such effects do not appear when considering how the Holy Agatha and Barbara affects the experience of the St. Peter's. The invention of the term auxiliary sensational form is the most notable outcome of this chapter, as it unites McDannel's and Bielo's views that imitations elicit the same wow-effect as the original with the evidence provided by Woets and Datta that this is actually impossible.

Whereas chapter 3 indicated that imitation mainly focuses the attention towards the St. Peter's, I found in chapter 4 that, from an art-historical perspective, the unique features of the Holy Agatha and Barbara warranted more attention. By using Riegl's monumental values for my analysis, I was able to show that an appreciation of the Basilica's historic value, age value and newness value emphasize this church's unique features. Nonetheless, the Basilica does succeed in reproducing the St. Peter's deliberate commemorative value. Moreover, its art and use values cannot be defined without reference to the Roman example. To further examine this relationship, I applied my findings from chapter 3 to these values, which showed that the references to the original enhances the Basilica's sacred capital, remind of the St. Peter's and provide a sensational form. Additionally, the current art-historical interest in imitation *per se* boosted the church's sacred capital. When I turned this question around and analysed how the Holy Agatha and Barbara influences the art-historic experience of the St. Peter's I found again the reminding effect of these similarities. However, it is unlikely that the St. Peter's provides a sensational form with regard to the Oudenbosch's Basilica, because the Roman church is in all aspects "beyond" the Holy Agatha and Barbara. The most pressing issue on this matter was whether the imitation affects the sacred capital of the St. Peter's. Here I combined Meyer's notion of sensational form with Benjamin's concept of aura which resulted in a paradox: As a sensational form the imitation preserves and enhances the sacred capital of the St. Peter's, but it also provides a taste of what the original looks like, thereby making the actual experience less impressive. Overall, this chapter showed that it is not self-evident that an imitation directs the attention to the original as the unique history and features of the imitation get more opportunity to shine when appreciated from an art-historical perspective.

In chapter 5 I showed that from a heritage perspective the Holy Agatha and Barbara participates in two different frameworks: One set by the Vatican and a national Dutch one. The Vatican considers heritage from a spiritual perspective: It is an evangelizing means, educational, a boost for piety and further evidence of God's presence among humanity. These functions are highly political as well, as they promote the stability and growth of the Catholic Church. Within this framework the Holy Agatha and Barbara is particularly interesting as an echo of the St. Peter's, because it gives the Church a *second chance* to convey the St. Peter's message. When I moved to the Dutch national perspective the importance of the connection to the St. Peter's disappeared. Here the *Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed*, the *Museum Catharijneconvent* and the *Stichting Behoud Basiliek Oudenbosch* frame the Basilica as an identity marker of the Dutch national identity, with functions in social, aesthetic and economic spheres. Overall, the meanings enclosed in the Holy Agatha and Barbara are not that

important within this framework, because as a church building it is already a testament of the Dutch Christian past. Because these two perspectives dictate such different experiences of the Basilica I contend that they constitute two different aesthetic formations: One formulated by the authorities of the Church and the other determined by Dutch governmental and local parties. The latter constitutes a further move away from the focus on the St. Peter's.

Bringing the results from these chapters together, I conclude that how the Holy Agatha and Barbara and the St. Peter's influence each other's experience depends mainly on the perspective one takes, or, more precisely, the aesthetic formation one participates in. A devout Catholic will see the significance of all the references to the St. Peter's, thus strongly feeling the Basilica's connection to the St. Peter's, whereas someone who is predominantly interested in the heritage status of the Basilica will see this church as a manifestation of the regional and national Christian past. These differences show that it is not self-evident that an imitation directs the attention to the original as it is very well possible that the imitation is involved in aesthetic formations where the relation to the original is not that relevant. Nevertheless, I also want to argue that these different aesthetic formations come together in one overarching aesthetic formation of Roman Catholicism, because the identity of these churches as being Roman Catholic is the thread that strings all the other perspectives together; Catholicism as a religious movement, Catholicism as the basis of magnificent art, Catholicism as the accommodator of countless heritage sites and so forth. There are therefore different aesthetic formations that coexist, yet the aesthetics all acknowledge the Catholic identity simultaneously, making them part of one overarching aesthetic formation.

The additional case studies indicate the existence of multiple aesthetic formations as well, nonetheless these were all somewhat different compared to the Holy Agatha and Barbara. With regard to the Mary, Queen of the World Cathedral, for example, the site was not part of a discourse on Christianity as an identity marker, yet the building still functions as a testimony of Canada's Christian past. Therefore, differences can be found in the details. Generally, the additional case studies – and their stories – indicate that there are many parallels between separate instances of St. Peter imitations in different places of the world.

Theoretical Contribution

By taking Meyer's concept of aesthetic formation as the foundation for my analysis, I found new ways of looking at the term sensational form and the relationship between sacred capital and aura. By coining the term *auxiliary* sensational form I showed that sometimes the "beyond" is mediated via a string of material constructions, because the imitation first points

to the original medium before providing a movement towards the "beyond". This phenomenon offers a middle road in the debate whether it is possible or not for an imitation to elicit a wow-effect that is *identical* to the feeling of awe coming from the original. Ethnographic research substantiates both standpoints, which indicates that both sides are right. To break this stalemate, I propose the term auxiliary sensational form as a new way of thinking about the wow-effect induced by both imitations and originals. Here it is not an issue whether the wow is identical to one's experience of the original, but more as to how both provide a movement towards the "beyond". However, at the same time the imitation potentially provides a sensational form in its default mode, because the original *itself* can be a "beyond". Pastor Hellemons illustrated this by calling the St. Peter's a sacred design. By pointing out these variations I was able to show that there are multiple kinds of sensational forms.

Concerning the relationship between sacred capital and aura, I demonstrated how the combination of Meyer's theory and Benjamin's notion of aura create a paradox. As I explained, it is not new to interconnect aura and sacrality, yet this paradox has not been recognized before. When an imitation is a sensational form in its default mode it will preserve and, potentially, enhance the sacred capital of the original, because otherwise the sensational form would eliminate itself. After all, it is a procedure or method that creates a sacred surplus constituting the "beyond". A sensational form is thus constructive – and not destructive- of sacred capital. Still, when approached from Benjamin's perspective, this is different. An imitation gives a "taste" of the original experience, thus stripping the original from its distance to the observer and therefore decreasing the feeling of awe when the observer finally encounters the original. My research could not resolve this paradox; however, I think that a solution to this conundrum potentially lies in the current definition of sensational form. Considering that both aura and the sacred can be conceptualized as a *sense of distance*, it is ironic that sensational forms provide "a movement towards (…) a beyond" (Meyer 2015, 20). Again, if sensational forms indeed provide such a movement, would these not eliminate themselves by closing the gap between the ordinary and the extraordinary? Perhaps future ethnographic research can suggest ways in which we can use the term without being burdened by this problem.

Finally I would like to point out that my research contributes to the present literature on heritage formation by showing that the message of the Holy Agatha and Barbara is not that important in the Dutch national heritage framework. As Lowenthal argues, heritage is, amongst other things, fabricated via selective forgetting. This study confirmed this theory by

pointing out that a church building *per se* is enough to demonstrate the Dutch Judaeo-Christian tradition. Although the Holy Agatha and Barbara has become a heritage site because its architecture imitates the St. Peter's, it is in this framework not that important what a church actually has to say, as the mere presence of these buildings indicates a Christian past. The result is a rather superficial understanding of Dutch Christian heritage which supports Lowenthal's idea of fabricated heritage.

Reflection on Methods and Outcomes

Three things stand out when reflecting on the methods and outcomes of this study. Firstly, I addressed a major topic, whereas many students in the field of religious studies nowadays tend to focus on small phenomena in their theses. Secondly, my research illustrates the merits and possibilities of interdisciplinarity in studies and thirdly, my analysis has showed the need for quantitative ethnographic research and an expansion of case studies. To start with the first issue, a look inside the thesis archives of major Dutch universities, such as Utrecht University, the University of Amsterdam and the University of Groningen demonstrates that there is a relative preoccupation with the study of small scale topics. To name a few examples, studies by other students focused on Sri Lankan Tamil Hindu processions in the Netherlands, on religious experiences in rave culture and on spiritual care in the Dutch Youth Services. These examples show that the field grows by a diversity of micro-scale analyses, probably because students are challenged to find original case studies in the face of the already existing bulk of literature on well known topics. However, I hope that this study shows that students can in fact contribute to major issues such as the St. Peter's Basilica's. Also, researching a topic like this is truly fitting when completing a degree in religious studies, as I have specialized myself in the most important church of Roman Catholicism.

Regarding interdisciplinarity, this study illustrates that a broader perspective leads to more nuanced conclusions. If I had only concentrated on the spiritual connection between the St. Peter's and the Holy Agatha and Barbara Basilica I would have quickly reached the conclusion that the experience of the imitation primarily directs the attention to the original. Yet, as I also considered the encounter from art-historical and heritage perspectives, the relation appeared to be more ambiguous. The Holy Agatha and Barbara's historical and age value, for example, directs the attention to the unique history of the building. Certainly Pastor Hellemons wanted his "own" St. Peter's, but from the moment of laying its foundation onwards, the church has had its own "life" to use Kopytoff's terminology (1986). The focus

on the St. Peter's wanes even further when taking up the heritage perspective. The Basilica exists in a Dutch national heritage framework, in which the message of the church is not necessarily heard, because the fact that the building is a manifestation of Dutch Christian history is already enough. Overall, the use of multiple perspectives reveals that an imitation offers much more than a simple echo of the original.

Furthermore, this study shows the merit of applying and merging theories and concepts from one academic field to another. This was especially illustrated by the way in which I connected the terms sensational form, sacred capital and aura to each other, which resulted in the sacred capital / aura paradox. Here I demonstrated how interdisciplinary research can result in new angles and viewpoints that need further exploration. The use of interdisciplinarity may be a cliché by now (see for example Akçeşme, Baktir and Steele 2016, Graff 2015, Lamont 2000, Salter and Hearn 1996, an Scheff 2015), but I argue that the merit of interdisciplinary research also lies in the opportunity such results present in truly connecting different fields to each other, thereby simplifying theories and complex concepts. The example of aura and sacred capital shows that these basically mean the same thing: A sense of distance that is constitutive of an experience of the "beyond". In other words, the humanities have no real need to invent different terms for essentially the same phenomena in individual fields of study. I therefore contend that interdisciplinarity can contribute to clearing up the mess of similar theories and terminology that characterizes the humanities. Like the natural sciences aim to find one theory to explain all natural phenomena, the humanities should endeavour to bring the different research fields together through shared concepts, theories and terms.

Considering as to what was lacking in my approach, I found that quantitative ethnography, and a wider selection of case studies or analytical perspectives, would have provided me with more evidence to substantiate my conclusions. In chapter 3, for example, I could only base my findings on what pastor Hellemons said and wrote. It would have been interesting to compare Hellemons's sentiments to the experiences of a larger group of Roman Catholics. Moreover, using a more extensive number of case studies and analytical perspectives would have allowed me to draw stronger conclusions about the practice of St. Peter imitation in general. Time constraints forced me to stick to a theoretical account and to focus on primarily one instance of imitation. On the one hand it would have taken quite some time to determine how many informants constitute a representative group of Catholics and, subsequently, to question a representative sample of these people. On the other hand, it would have been a very time-consuming process to get acquainted with and study more case studies.

My analysis thus shows what kinds of experiences an imitation *could elicit*, rather than what experiences *actually appear,* where these appear and in what numbers. For this reason, future research should take these issues into account on which I will reflect more in the next section.

Suggestions for Future Research

As noted above, my research lacked a quantitative ethnographic component and the case studies were limited in scope. As a result my conclusions are also limited. Do Catholics experience the same sensations as pastor Hellemons does? What do tourists value the most in the Holy Agatha and Barbara? How impressed are visitors with the St. Peter's when they have already seen an imitation? These are the questions that future ethnographic research should focus on. With regard to the expansion of case studies, it would be particularly helpful if *all* imitations of the St. Peter's were to be listed and categorized depending on their characteristics. This would provide a comprehensive overview of the practice of imitation, which would be very helpful when studying how these churches relate to one another. However, I do not think that such a research project is realistic right now. Many imitations have not even been noticed by scholars yet, which indicates that such a study would probably fail to take all cases into account. Instead it makes more sense to start with smaller comparative research projects, such as this study, taking two or three cases of imitation at the time and learning how these relate to each other. If more scholars endeavour to immerse themselves in such research, the field will grow and, ultimately, it will be possible to create a comprehensive overview of the practice worldwide.

Another suggestion for future research concerns the extension of perspectives. This study was limited to religious, art-historical and heritage perspectives, but there are more ways of approaching the experience of imitations. For example, how are the imitation and the original connected from a political or economic standpoint? Naturally, my analysis incorporated such dimensions, considering that as a heritage site the Holy Agatha and Barbara was part of a political discourse on the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to learn what happens if political or economic perspectives take centre stage. Where does the focus go in a political framework? Is it more focused on the original or on the imitation in its own right? Studies that strive to answer such questions will result in a more complete view on how such churches affect each other's experience.

On a more theoretical level it will be interesting to further explore the term (auxiliary) sensational form and the sacred capital / aura paradox. This study shows the existence of auxiliary sensational forms, which first direct one's attention to another material medium

before pointing one's awareness towards the world of saints and God. This raises the question whether there is a possible string of material constructions that the medium points to before directing the attention to the "beyond". In other words, to better understand this term, networks of (auxiliary) sensational forms need to be analysed. Moreover, this variation on the term suggests that there are potentially other kinds of sensational forms besides the default mode that Meyer introduced. This study also showed that it is unclear how imitations affect the experience of the original by showing the sacred capital / aura paradox. With the evidence found I could not resolve this paradox, thus it is up to further research to find answers to this. As indicated, I assume possible solutions can be found via quantitative ethnography and in analyses of Meyer's notion of sensational forms. However, there are more options. To name one, close readings of both Meyer's and Benjamin's inspirations can shed light on the conceptualisation of the sacred and aura. Such research potentially shows if and where there are possibilities to reconcile both positions.

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